Ejus (Analogiæ) hæc vis est, ut id quod dubium est ad aliquid simile, de quo non quæritur, referat, ut incerta certis probet."—
QUINT. INST. ORAT., l. i. c. vi.

PRINTED BY W. CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

CONTENTS.

"I know no author who has made a more just and happy use of analogical reasoning than Bishop Butler in his 'Analogy of Religion.'"—*Dr. Thomas Reid.*

"The most original and profound work extant in any language on the philosophy of religion."—*Sir J. Mackintosh,* 'Progress of Eth. Phil.'

"The most argumentative and philosophical defence of Christianity ever submitted to the world."—*Lord Brougham,* 'A Disc. of Nat. Theol. p. 202.

"The author to whom I am under the greatest obligations, is Bishop Butler." "The whole of this admirable treatise, one of the most remarkable that any language can produce, is intended to show that the principles of moral government taught in the Scriptures, are strictly analogous to those everywhere exhibited in the government of the world, as seen in natural religion."—*Dr. Wayland,* 'Moral Phil.' p. 5; 'Intell. Phil.' p. 338.

"I am ready to acknowledge, that I trace so distinctly to his writings the origin of the soundest and clearest views that I possess upon the nature of the human mind, that I could not write upon this or any kindred subject, without a consciousness that I was directly or indirectly borrowing largely from him."—*Dr. O'Brien,* 'Sermons on the Human Nature of our Lord.'

"It is from this book that I have been confirmed in many truths, of which it does not speak a word, and which probably never entered the mind of the author."—*Dr. M'Crie,* 'Life,' p. 84.

"I have derived greater aid from the views and reasonings of Bishop Butler, than I have been able to find besides in the whole range of our extant authorship."—*Dr. Chalmers,* 'Bridgew. Tr.' Prof.

"I am more indebted to his writings than to those of any other uninspired writer, for the insight which I have been enabled to attain into the motives of the Divine economy, and the foundations of moral obligation."—*Dr. Kaye,* Bishop of Lincoln, 'Some Remains of,' by J. B., 1853.

"I am an entire disciple of Butler."—*Cecil,* 'Remains,' p. 195.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE volume which is now introduced into the Educational Series of the Religious Tract Society, contains one of the most remarkable productions of modern times. It is one of the best works on Christian evidences in any language: it forms an admirable mental discipline; while the spirit in which it is written, and the profound suggestive truths it contains, make it one of the most instructive books (quite apart from its main purpose), that can be put into the hands of a thoughtful student.

Appended to the Analogy, will be found the Fifteen Sermons of Butler, on subjects chiefly Ethical. Besides their intrinsic value, they are remarkable for the influence they have exerted on modern Ethical science. It is, in their connexion with that science, that they deserve special attention; and it is gratifying to find that they form one of the text-books on ETHICS in several schools and colleges.

In this edition, pains have been taken to secure an accurate text. In the Analogy, the beautiful edition of Professor Fitzgerald has been followed throughout; the text of the Sermons is taken from the fourth edition, published under Butler's own eye. The example of Dr. Whewell, might have induced the Editor to break up Butler's text into paragraphs, so as to indicate more distinctly the course of thought. On mature deliberation, however, this plan seemed a liberty which he was not justified in taking. He has therefore given the text as Butler published it, indicating, by marginal letters and figures, what he deems to be the train of argument. These letters and figures are explained in the analysis prefixed to each chapter.

The analysis is not intended to supersede the text, but simply to help in studying it. It is therefore as brief as possible, and so framed as to require continual reference to

Butler himself. . . . From experience, the Editor can affirm, that, with most young students, some such aid is essential to the mastering of the arguments of the volume. In preparing the analysis, he has freely consulted the outlines given by Bishop Halifax and Bishop Wilson, by Hobart, Barnes, and Dr. Emory (Ed. New York, 1852), and especially the analyses published by Duke and Wilkinson. The last two are peculiarly happy, though too long and cumbrous for easy use. Of the Dissertations and Sermons, no analysis seems to have been published, though they are both important and difficult enough to make one acceptable.

The Notes appended to this Edition have a threefold aim. Sometimes they give the history of the opinions Butler is refuting, or trace the influence of Butler's own views upon later writers. Sometimes they correct or modify arguments, which more modern inquiry has shown to be of questionable force; and sometimes they point out what most Christian men will admit to be deficiencies in the evangelical tone or sentiments of the Author. Notes of the second and third kind have been added with some diffidence. The Editor yields to none in reverence for Butler's spirit, or in general admiration of the soundness of his reasoning. But the claims of truth are paramount; and after all that has been written on the subject of which Butler treats, there is really no great presumption in suggesting the corrections which this volume will be found to contain.

The Index to the volume has been prepared with considerable care. It is based on one which was made by Dr. Bentham, Prof. of Divinity at Oxford (1763-76), and revised by Bp. Butler himself. The manuscript of this Index remained for many years unknown; till in 1842, it was published by Mr. Bartlett. The Editor has also used the Indexes prepared for the Editions of Professor Fitzgerald and of Dr. Emory, and has inserted many additional topics By giving the chapter, as well as the page of each reference, it is hoped that the Index may be easily available for framing questions on the entire book.

LIFE OF BUTLER.

JOSEPH BUTLER, the author of 'The Analogy,' was born at Wantage, in Berkshire (the birth-place of king Alfred), on the 18th of May, 1692, and was the youngest of eight children. His father, Thomas Butler, was a respectable linen-draper in the place, but before Joseph's birth had retired from business, and was at the time residing at the extremity of the town, in a house called 'The Priory.' The house is still standing, and the room is shown in which Butler is said to have been born. His education was begun in the grammar-school of his native place, under the direction of the Rev. Philip Barton; but his father, perceiving his talent and taste for learning, resolved upon training him for the ministry among the Presbyterians, to which body he himself belonged; with this view, he sent him to an academy at Gloucester (afterwards removed to Tewkesbury), then kept by Mr. Samuel Jones. Mr. Jones was a man of no common ability, and had among his pupils, several distinguished men. Among these may be mentioned, his relative Jeremiah Jones, author of an excellent 'Treatise on the Canon;' Dr. Nath. Lardner, author of the 'Credibility of the Gospels;' Dr. Maddox, Bishop of Worcester; Samuel Chandler, author of the 'Critical Life of David;' and Secker, Butler's intimate friend, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

From an early period, the thoughts of Butler were turned to Theology and Metaphysics. While a pupil of Mr. Jones', and at the age of twenty-one, he gave a remarkable proof of his vigour and acuteness, by his anonymous correspondence with Dr. Samuel Clarke. The 'Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God,' had just been published, and was attracting much attention. Butler questioned the reasoning of the sixth and seventh propositions of Clarke (' on the omnipresence' and 'unity of God'), and displayed such

sagacity, as immediately excited Dr. Clarke's notice. His letters suggested objections, which, in Sir J. Mackintosh's opinion, are really insuperable, 'and are marked by an acuteness, which neither he nor any other ever surpassed.' They are appended to the later editions of Clarke's work. On both the questions which Butler raised, however, he seems eventually to have agreed with his opponent. In the letters, he acknowledges that Clarke had satisfied him upon the first point; and in the Analogy (Part i. chap. vi.), he professes himself an adherent to Clarke's views on the second.

Soon after this correspondence, Butler became dissatisfied with the grounds of his nonconformity, and resolved to unite himself with the Established Church. This step was not agreeable to the wishes of his father, who endeavoured to divert him from his purpose. At length, finding his son's resolution was not to be shaken, he yielded, and Joseph was entered as a Commoner at Oriel College, Oxford, on the 17th March, 1714. Here he formed a friendship with Mr. Edward Talbot, son of Dr. Talbot, afterwards Bishop of Durham. Through the influence of Dr. Talbot, and that of Butler's former correspondent, Dr. Clarke (then Rector of St. James's), he was appointed, in 1718, Preacher at the Rolls Court, London. He was then in his 26th year, and could not have been long ordained. In the meantime, the mind of Secker had undergone a similar change on the subject of nonconformity, and young Talbot, dying, had so earnestly recommended both to the favour of his father, that Dr. Talbot presented Butler, in 1721, to the living of Houghton, and Secker, soon after, to that of Houghton-le-Spring. In 1725, Butler was presented, by the same friend, to the living of Stanhope, where for seven years he devoted himself to the discharge of his pastoral duties, and laboured at his 'Analogy.' Soon after receiving this presentation, he resigned his place as preacher at the Rolls. On resigning, he published his 'Fifteen Sermons,' preached in the chapel of that Court, and dedicated the volume to Sir Joseph Jekyl, 'as a public mark of gratitude for the favours received during his connexion with that Society.' The sermons thus published, were selected from a number of others, some of the rest being probably worked up into the 'Analogy.'

The 'Analogy' was first published in 1736, and is one of the masterpieces of British theology. The author's own mind had been long directed to the theme it discusses, but his determination to prosecute his studies in relation to it, was strengthened by the circumstances of the times. In the established church, there was then little evangelical life. Doddridge had just published his "Free Thoughts on the most probable means of reviving the Dissenting interest, occasioned by the late inquiry into the causes of its decay," and had recently established his Academy at Northampton. John Wesley had recently taught Greek at Oxford, and was now gone to Georgia, little dreaming of the work which God had for him at home. Amid the lifelessness which thus prevailed among all sections of Christians, it had come "to be taken for granted," says Butler, "by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly, they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained, but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." "I have lived to see," said Warburton, speaking of the same period, "that fatal crisis, when religion hath lost its hold on the minds of the people."

This state of feeling is illustrated, and was aggravated, by the publications of Woolston, Tindal, and Collins, who attacked Christianity on different sides. Woolston directed his force against the *miracles* of Scripture; Tindal, against the *necessity* of a revelation; and Collins, against its *prophetic evidence.* A host of defenders immediately appeared, including some of the ablest men of the age—Chandler, Sherlock, Lardner, and Bentley. Scores of volumes were written and published, but among the most important is the 'Analogy.' Butler has constantly in view the arguments of these infidel writers, though his work is distinguished by a freedom from controversy, and a moral majesty, as welcome to the student as it is conducive to the interests of truth Next in power to the practical rebuke which was given by the revival of religion to the unhallowed spirit of these

times, was the volume which is here presented to the reader. Four editions were published in the author's life: The main argument has remained without a reply, though particular parts have been subjected to adverse, and, in some cases, successful criticism.

To the science of ethics, Butler has rendered a service second in importance only to the service which his Analogy has conferred on the evidences of Christianity. His merit consists in the completeness of his development of the supremacy of conscience; in the distinction he has drawn between particular affections and self-love; and, above all, in the Baconian spirit in which he prosecutes his inquiries. He does for ethics what Locke did for mental science, recalling attention to observation and facts. The excellences of his system, as compared with the systems of his predecessors and contemporaries, are briefly indicated in the Notes to the second of the Dissertations, and the Three Sermons on Human Nature.

The subsequent events of Butler's life are soon told. In 1733, Secker, his firm friend, induced Lord Chancellor Talbot to nominate him his chaplain, and in 1736, to make him a prebendary of Rochester. Through the exertions of the same friend, Butler's name was brought under the notice of queen Caroline, and he was made clerk of the closet. The queen was very fond of philosophy, and her chaplain's attendance was commanded every evening, from seven till nine. On her death, a year after the Analogy was published, she earnestly recommended Butler to her husband, George II., and in 1738, he was appointed bishop of Bristol, and afterwards (as the see was very poor), dean of St. Paul's, London. In 1746, he was made clerk of the closet to George II., and in 1747, was offered the primacy. Taking a dark view of the state of the established church, and deeming himself unfit to remedy the evils he deplored, he declined the office. In 1750, however, the see of Durham becoming vacant by the death of Dr. Edward Chandler, Butler was presented to it, and held it till the 16th June, 1752, when he died at Bath, in the 60th year of his age. ...s buried in the cathedral church of Bristol, where a stone was placed over his remains, with an inscrip-

tion by Dr. W. Forster, his chaplain. In 1834, an elegant monument was erected in the same church, with a very appropriate inscription, furnished by Southey.

The *man* himself it is not difficult to picture. Three portraits of him were taken while he lived; the first, while he resided at Stanhope, in his 40th year; the second, shortly after he became bishop of Bristol; and the last, not long before his death. In all, may be seen a calm and benignant countenance, regular and delicate features, with a sweetness of expression that must have won attachment and love. Traditions gathered up at Stanhope, eighty years after his death, speak of him as "riding a black pony, and always riding fast." He is said also to have lived very retired, to have been very kind to the poor, and so pestered with beggars, that to get rid of them, he often returned to the rectory without completing his ride.

Of his appearance and behaviour as bishop of Durham, we have three distinct accounts. "From the first of my remembrance," says Miss Talbot, "I have ever known in him the kind affectionate friend, the faithful adviser, which he would condescend to when I was quite a child; and the most delightful companion, from a delicacy of thinking, an extreme politeness, a vast knowledge of the world, and a something peculiar to be met with in nobody else. And all this in a man whose sanctity of manners and sublimity of genius, gave him one of the first ranks among men." "During the short time," says Surtees, "that Butler held the see of Durham, he conciliated all hearts. In advanced years, he retained the same genuine modesty and native sweetness of disposition, which had distinguished him in youth, and in retirement." "He was," says Hutchinson, "of a most reverend aspect; his face thin and pale; but there was a divine placidness in his countenance, which inspired veneration, and expressed the most benevolent mind. His white hair hung gracefully on his shoulders, and his whole figure was patriarchal."[1]

He was naturally somewhat melancholy, very fond of music, and, as may be gathered from the preceding sketches, modest and retiring. In parliament, which he attended regularly, he never spoke, nor took any active part in

[1] Quoted in 'Fitzgerald's Life.'

politics. Hence, Horace Walpole said of him, "that he was wafted to the see of Durham in a cloud of metaphysics, and remained absorbed in it." By natural temperament, as well as by religious conviction, he was very conscientious, and sometimes even scrupulous; most generous in his liberality, simple in all his habits, discountenancing extravagance, and spending most of his income in repairing churches, building parsonage-houses, and in aiding local charities. Though he was never married, and had few dependents, he died worth less than a half-year's income of the see he held.

A story is told (on the authority of Mr. Venn), of his last moments, quite in harmony with his general character, and beautifully illustrative of the grace of Christ. When Butler lay on his death-bed, he called for his chaplain, and said, "Though I have endeavoured to avoid sin, and to please God to the utmost of my power, yet, from the consciousness of perpetual infirmities, I am still afraid to die." "My lord," said the chaplain, "you have forgotten that Jesus Christ is a Saviour." "True," was the answer, "but how shall I know that he is a Saviour for me?" "My lord, it is written, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'" "True," said the Bishop, "and I am surprised, that though I have read that Scripture a thousand times over I never felt its virtue till this moment; and now I die happy."

[SACRED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
JOSEPH BUTLER, D.C.L.,
TWELVE YEARS BISHOP OF THIS DIOCESE,
AND
AFTERWARDS BISHOP OF DURHAM,
WHOSE MORTAL PART IS DEPOSITED
IN THE CHOIR OF THIS CATHEDRAL.

OTHERS HAD ESTABLISHED
THE HISTORICAL AND PROPHETICAL GROUNDS
OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,
AND
THAT SURE TESTIMONY OF ITS TRUTH
WHICH IS FOUND IN ITS PERFECT ADAPTATION
TO THE HEART OF MAN.

IT WAS RESERVED FOR HIM TO DEVELOP
ITS ANALOGY TO THE CONSTITUTION
AND COURSE OF NATURE.

AND LAYING HIS STRONG FOUNDATIONS
IN THE DEPTH OF THAT GREAT ARGUMENT,
THERE TO CONSTRUCT
ANOTHER AND IRREFRAGABLE PROOF:
THUS RENDERING PHILOSOPHY
SUBSERVIENT TO FAITH:
AND FINDING IN OUTWARD AND VISIBLE THINGS
THE TYPE AND EVIDENCE*
OF THOSE WITHIN THE VEIL.

BORN A.D. 1692. DIED 1752.

* HE WHO BELIEVES THE SCRIPTURE
TO HAVE PROCEEDED FROM HIM WHO IS THE
AUTHOR OF NATURE, MAY WELL EXPECT
TO FIND THE SAME SORT OF DIFFICULTIES
IN IT AS ARE FOUND IN THE CONSTITUTION
OF NATURE."—'Origen, Philocal.' p. 23.]

Monument erected in the Cathedral of Bristol, in 1834. The inscription is by Dr. Southey.

ADVERTISEMENT

PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION.

If the reader should meet here with anything which he had not before attended to, it will not be in the observations upon the constitution and course of Nature, these being all obvious, but in the application of them: in which, though there is nothing but what appears to me of some real weight, and therefore of great importance, yet he will observe several things which will appear to him of very little, if he can think things to be of little importance which are of any real weight at all, upon such a subject as religion. However, the proper force of the following treatise lies in the whole general analogy considered together.

It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world. On the contrary, thus much, at least, will be here found, not taken for granted, but proved, that any reasonable man, who will thoroughly consider the matter, may be as much assured as he is of his own being, that it is not, however, so clear a case, that there is nothing in it. There is, I think, strong evidence of its truth; but it is certain no one can, upon principles of reason, be satisfied of the contrary. And the practical consequence to be drawn from this is not attended to by every one who is concerned in it.

May, 1736.

THE ANALOGY.

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DISSERTATION II.

ANALOGY; ITS NATURE AND USE.

[ANALOGY, the principle of reasoning adopted in this volume, needs to be carefully defined, 'no word in our tongue being more loosely used' (Mill.) Quintilian, whose language Butler has placed on the title of his book, indicates by the term a part of grammar. So regarded, its business is to fix the declension or gender or conjugation of unknown words, by comparing their forms with those of other words already familiar. The Schoolmen, on the other hand, used it to describe terms in connexion with Rhetoric. With them, analogous words were words founded on resemblance; properly applicable to one object, and less properly to another. 'Greek nouns in ιδης are generally patronymics, as are Scotch names with Mc, so therefore are these'—is an example of the first; 'A smiling landscape' is an example of the second. In both these senses the word analogy is still used in common life; and on analogy in the second sense, nearly all the technical language of moral and mental science is framed. A very little examination will show that these senses of the word are closely connected with the sense in which Archbishop Whately uses it.[1] Similarity of relation is implied in each case.

Properly speaking, analogy is a kind of resemblance; and an argument from analogy is founded upon such resemblance. Not *any* kind of resemblance, but a particular kind. Resemblances in appearance, in incidental circumstances, or even in properties, considered by themselves, form no sufficient basis for analogy. They often form the basis of figures of speech, or allegories, but they prove nothing. They do not even appeal to the reason, only to the fancy; and their use is—illustration or embellishment. If, however, the resemblance involves, or is supposed to involve, a similarity or identity of relation, there is analogy. It appeals, more or less, to the reasoning faculty, and may form a solid argument. Hence it is defined by Aristotle as a 'likeness' or 'parity of reason,'[2] and by Dr. Copleston, as a similarity, not 'of two things,' but 'of two relations.'[3] 'As two is to four, so is four to eight, or three to six;'

[1] 'Rhetoric,' Part I. chap. II. § 7.

[2] λόγων ὁμοιότης: ἰσότης λόγου, Ethic. Nic. v. 3.

[3] 'Enquiry into the Doctrines of Necessity and Predestination. Notes to Disc. III.

'As the law of projectile forces is to the motion of a stone thrown from the hand, so is the law of central and centrifugal forces to the motion of the heavenly bodies through space:' 'In nature, means apparently undesirable are used by God (the deist admits) to produce desirable ends, the use of similar means for similar ends in a revelation, is therefore consistent with the supposition that the revelation is from God: He does sometimes use them in the one, He *may* use them in the other: Some means he *nearly always* uses in the one; some means, therefore, he will *most probably* use in the other:' All these are examples of analogy, and in each case, it is not the things which are alike—2, 4, 3, 6, but their relations to each other, or to other things. It will be observed, that the two sets of relations compared may consist of three distinct terms, one reappearing in each set, or of four; and that the reasoning is unaffected by this circumstance.

In studying 'The Analogy,' it is of the utmost importance to keep in mind the chief uses of this kind of reasoning.

1. As an argument, it is *demonstrative* only in proving results or causes to be not improbable. It meets objections by a direct negative. It *defends* Christianity, without in the first instance contributing materially to the positive evidence on its side. Origen, for example, affirms 'that he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from Him who is the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in Nature.' This is an analogical statement. None, however, can say that the difficulties of Scripture prove it to be Divine; though it is conclusive to say, 'The difficulties of Scripture do not justify us in denying its Divine origin, for in Nature there are similar difficulties, and Nature is admitted to have sprung from Him.' So, should the atheist affirm that there is no God, and thence infer that there can be no future state of reward and punishment, Analogy replies— 'In this life, though, as is said, there be no God, men are rewarded and punished; that is, they are under government. If so, that there is no God is no reason why they may not be under like government in the life to come.' 'No-God' is consistent with government now; nor will it be inconsistent with government hereafter. To repel objections, therefore, is the first business of analogy; and in that department its argument amounts to demonstration, and its conclusions, expressed in negative forms ('not inconsistent with,' 'not incredible that,') or their affirmative equivalents ('it may notwithstanding'), are irrefragable. The whole of the reasonings of Bishop Butler may be put in this form; and it will be observed that the second part of his work uses analogy for these defensive purposes exclusively.

2. There is, however, a wider application of analogical reasoning. and indeed it may be said, that there is a wider meaning of the term itself. Whately, Copleston, and others, use the word 'Analogy' in the strict sense, as meaning resemblance of *relations*. But by many metaphysical writers, including Locke, Hartley, Mill, and Butler himself, it is used to express an argument founded on resemblance of any kind, though generally falling short of full proof. Sir Humphrey Davy, for example, discovered that potash has a metallic base. But other alkalies have sensible properties like potash. He therefore concluded, that it was probable they had also metallic bases; a conclusion verified by subsequent discovery.

Evidence resting upon analogy in this sense admits, of course, of different degrees. It may amount to the highest moral certainty, it may give no more than the lowest presumption. The *positive* evidence, for example, in favour of a future life, founded on the single analogy of the changes of the chrysalis is small;[3] while the evidence founded on the uniform fact, that in Nature nothing is ever *wasted* or *annihilated*—therefore, not the soul[4]—is strong: the force depending in each case, on the frequency of the supposed analogous facts, and the real resemblance between the things compared. Examples of this use of analogy abound in the first part of this treatise.

It is important to remark, that in the affairs of life, all evidence is of the *kind* described in the last paragraph. Mathematical reasoning is *demonstrative*, and its conclusions certain, because they are virtually included in the premises; so are the conclusions of logic. But in matters of fact, and in maxims of prudence, we are guided simply by what is probable. What is often called even *positive* proof belongs to the same class. Testimony, written records, the very evidence of our senses, to take the strongest case, are none of them certain; they are probable, and probable only.[5] The remark of Butler, therefore, is just, that analogy differs from other evidence only in *degree*, not in *kind*; and that its force depends on the completeness of the resemblance (in what is material), of the things we compare.

3. By some writers, as Dr. Hampden, forms of induction itself are included under this term; and Butler seems to concur in this view (p. 4.) When once an inquirer understands what a cause is, and why or how it acts, so as to be able to point out the connexion between it and the result, and then applies this knowledge to con-

[3] Butler, Part i. chap. i.

[4] 'Is it possible to make the Best of both Worlds,' p. 220.

[5] See Gambier on 'Moral Evidence,' p. 67

nect other and similar results with the same or similar causes, testing the accuracy of the process by experiment, the analogy becomes induction in the strictest sense. The existence of a present moral government is *proved* in this way, by Butler; and the fact of a future government is (admitting a future life), all but proved: for the evidence is traced up to qualities in man, and to attributes in God, which we can hardly conceive to be capable of change.

Still, as human nature is fallen, the doctrine of causation abstruse, especially when applied to God and his perfections, and reasoning from the known to the unknown, from what is to what will be, extremely uncertain; *positive* arguments from analogy in relation to religion, must be received with great caution. Arguments *against* objections to revelation, and involving *negative* conclusions, rest on different premises, and may be admitted without distrust. To show from Nature what God will do or reveal in Scripture, is one thing: To show from Nature that parts of Scripture which speak of his doings, form no valid objection to its Divine authority, is another.[6]

The reader may find these questions more or less fully discussed in Locke, Book v. chap. 16, sec. 12; Reid's Enquiries, chap. 4; Stewart's Elements, ii. chap. 4, sec. 2, § 3; Mill's Logic, ii. 426; and in Hampden's Essay on the Philos. Evidence of Christianity, p. 60, etc. All these writers concur in giving the wider meaning of analogy. Tappan's Logic, Book iv. sec. 10; Dr. Tatham's Chart and Scale of Truth, vol. i. p. 50–62; Wayland's Intellectual Philosophy, chap. vi. sec. 4; and Chalmers' Lectures on Butler's Analogy, favour the narrower view. See also the works of Whately, Coplestone, and Gambier, already quoted.

[6] The language of Dugald Stewart seems on the whole just. After referring to the opinions of Dr. Reid and Dr. Campbell, and expressing his doubts "whether both of these ingenious writers have not somewhat underrated the importance of analogy as a medium of proof," he adds, "I acknowledge, at the same time, that between the positive and the negative application of this species of evidence, there is an essential difference. When employed to refute an objection, it may often furnish an argument irresistibly and unanswerably convincing. When employed as a medium of proof, it can never authorize more than a probable conjecture. . . . In some instances, however, the probability resulting from a concurrence of different analogies, may rise as high, as to produce an effect on the belief scarcely distinguishable from moral certainty".—'Elements,' ii., 423, note

The precise place of analogy in the Christian Evidences is easily assigned to it. It is part of the *Internal* Evidence, resting on the message itself, not on the credentials of the messengers. It appeals, not to a priori reasoning, but to facts and principles already learned by experience in Nature; not to minute coincidences between the sacred history and other records, or to the feelings and spiritual insight of renewed men; but to the consciences and judgments of all. It requires less learning than External Evidence, involves no assumptions, and is appreciable by the whole race. In Scripture, it is of constant occurrence: Every parable and miracle, every comparison and figure, being intended to explain and in some degree to enforce Divine truth by things and facts already familiar. See Matt. v.-vii.; 1 Cor. xv. 36.]

INTRODUCTION.

[ANALYSIS.]

A[1] Of the nature of analogical evidence in general.

1 Such evidence is various in degrees, from low presumptions to moral certainty: *one* slight presumption cannot make anything probable; but many can. Ebb and flow of tide.

2 Its foundation is verisimilitude, or likeness to some truth, or fact; likeness either in the thing itself, or in its evidence or circumstances.

Here the degree of probability is as the frequency with which we have observed the same or like things. It becomes presumption, opinion, conviction, and forms a rule of hope and judgments.

3 Its measure imperfect, but obligatory:

a *Imperfect*, and fit for limited capacities, for to God nothing is probable;

b Yet *obligatory*, however low the presumption in favour of any opinion, or practice. Indeed, where men must act, prudence will select the course which seems right, even though the chances of success are even or adverse.

B Of the utility of such evidence, and its application to religion. Its measure not discussed, but yet its utility obvious

1 In determining our judgments and practice in common life:

2 In relation to religion and God's present government. From it one may reason with Origen,

[1] In these outlines the connexion and subordination of thoughts are indicated thus:—

A	1	a	1	(a)	(1)
B	2	b	2	(b)	(2)
C	3	c	3	(c)	(3)

and very occasionally (a) (i)

where, for example, (1) is a subdivision under (a), as (a) is under 1, and 1 under a, and a under 1, and 1 under A. Ordinarily A, B, etc., represent distinct subjects. Corresponding letters and figures will be found in the margin of the text.

a That difficulties must be expected in Scripture as in Nature.
b That a denial of the Divine origin of Scripture on this ground will end in a denial of the Divine origin of the world, and,
c That both systems have the same Author; or, at least, that objections against the one are answered by the other.
2 In forming our notions of religion, it is superior,
a To reasoning on assumed principles:
b To reasoning on true principles, the applicability of which is assumed; and hence,
c Butler intends to apply it to religion, natural and revealed, assuming an Author and Governor of Nature; which assumption has no prior improbability, and has often been proved by accumulated evidence:
d To vain speculations how the world might have been better; which speculations may be shown to be vain, thus—
1 Probably the speculator himself would admit his plan to be not the very best, whether he contemplated the greatest amount of virtue or of happiness, or of both,
2 And certainly foolish and extravagant plans would be formed, involving conclusions like these,—all creatures must be made at once perfect, free from all hazard and toil, and without dread or risk of punishment,
3 For such speculations men have not faculties.
(a) Of *ends* we may judge; hence we believe that the greatest amount of virtue and happiness is God's end in providence, a belief to which our whole nature impels us, and *of* which that nature is an evidence (see 4);
(b) But of means we cannot—no,
(c) Not even of the best means of training a *single* person, much less a system; and,
(d) Hence men cannot judge each other; how then can they judge God?
C Practical conclusion: Leave speculation, and mark,
1 The conduct of Nature with respect to intelligent creatures.
2 The laws to be gathered from it; and,
3 The analogy between what we *find* in Nature, and what we believe or expect in religion: whence it will appear that they are both of a piece.
D The force of *this* analogy,
1 Varies, being sometimes a practical proof, sometimes a confirmation, of what is otherwise proved,
2 Shows that religion is not ridiculous, unless Nature be so; and

3 Answers objections against the system of religion, and to a large extent objections against its evidence.

E The treatise is divided into two parts, and is thus analysed:

The first, On religion in general, *i.e.*, on natural religion: wherein it is shown that there is a *future* life, Chap. I.; a *natural* government, present and future, Chap. II.; a *moral* government, Chap. III.; that life is a probation state, involving *risks*, Chap. IV., promoting *improvement* and testing character, Chap. V.; that the *facts* of moral government are not affected by any opinions on necessity, Chap. VI.; and that the *perfection* of God's government cannot be objected to, for it is, as a scheme, incomprehensible, Chap. VII.

The second, On Christianity in particular, *i.e.*, on revealed religion: where it is shown that Christianity is *important*, Chap. I.; that as *miraculous*, no objection can be urged against it, Chap. II.; that as a *scheme*, no valid *objection* can be urged against it, either against it as a *fact*, though differing from our expectations, Chap. III.; or against the *moral perfections* displayed in it, Chap. IV., § 1; or against the system of *means* and *general laws* whereby it is carried on, Chap. IV., § 2; or against *mediation*, Chap. V.; or against its want of universality and supposed deficient proof, Chap. VI.; or against its evidence, prophetic, miraculous, or general, Chap. VII.; and, lastly, that analogy is strongly and in various ways on the side of religion, general and revealed (a, b, c), Chap. VIII.]

PROBABLE evidence is essentially distinguished from demonstrative by this, that it admits of degrees;[1] and of all variety of them, from the highest moral certainty to the very lowest presumption. We cannot indeed say a thing is probably true upon one very slight presumption for it; because, as there may be probabilities on both sides of a question, there may be some against it: and though there be not, yet a slight presumption does not beget that degree of conviction, which is implied in saying a thing is probably true. But that the slightest possible presumption is of the nature of a probability appears from hence, that such low presumption, often repeated, will amount even to moral certainty. Thus a man's having observed the ebb and flow of the tide to-day, affords A 1

[1] [See Introductory Statements on Analogy.]

some sort of presumption, though the lowest imaginable, that it may happen again to-morrow: but the observation of this event for so many days, and months, and ages together, as it has been observed by mankind, gives us a full assurance that it will.

2 That which chiefly constitutes Probability is expressed in the word Likely, *i. e.*, like some truth,[2] or true event; like it, in itself, in its evidence, in some more or fewer of its circumstances. For when we determine a thing to be probably true, suppose that an event has or will come to pass, it is from the mind's remarking in it a likeness to some other event, which we have observed has come to pass. And this observation forms, in numberless daily instances, a presumption, opinion, or full conviction that such event has or will come to pass; according as the observation is, that the like event has sometimes, most commonly, or always, so far as our observation reaches, come to pass at like distances of time, or place, or upon like occasions. Hence arises the belief that a child, if it lives twenty years, will grow up to the stature and strength of a man; that food will contribute to the preservation of its life, and the want of it for such a number of days be its certain destruction. So likewise the rule and measure of our hopes and fears concerning the success of our pursuits; our expectations that others will act so and so in such circumstances; and our judgment that such actions proceed from such principles; all these rely upon our having observed the like to what we hope, fear, expect, judge; I say upon our having observed the like, either with respect to others or

[2] Verisimile. [Though Butler seems to use the words probable and likely in the same sense, there is a difference between them, which he seems elsewhere to admit. A thing is "probable" when we can allege some reason for it; "likely" when it bears a resemblance to an actual or supposed fact. It is the old distinction between εἰκὸς and σημεῖον, the ground of opinion why a charge may be true and the proof of the charge itself. In common usage, however, "likely" and "probable" (as εἰκὸς and σημεῖον) are not distinguished, from the fact that the likelihood of things is often placed among the proofs that they have occurred; as when, from avowed ill-will to a murdered man, it is attempted to prove that a prisoner has murdered him. See Hampden's Philos. Evid., p. 268, and Intro. Note on Analogy.]

ourselves. And thus, whereas the prince[a] who had always lived in a warm climate, naturally concluded, in the way of analogy, that there was no such thing as water's becoming hard, because he had always observed it to be fluid and yielding; we, on the contrary, from analogy conclude that there is no presumption at all against this; that it is supposable there may be frost in England any given day in January next; probable that there will on some day of the month; and that there is a moral certainty, *i.e.*, ground for an expectation, without any doubt of it, in some part or other of the winter.

Probable evidence, in its very nature, affords but an imperfect kind of information; and is to be considered as relative only to beings of limited capacities. For nothing which is the possible object of knowledge, whether past, present, or future, can be probable to an infinite Intelligence; since it cannot but be discerned absolutely as it is in itself, certainly true, or certainly false. But to *us*, probability is the very guide of life.

From these things it follows, that in questions of difficulty, or such as are thought so, where more satisfactory evidence cannot be had, or is not seen; if the result of examination be, that there appears upon the whole any the lowest presumption on one side, and none on the other, or a greater presumption on one side, though in the lowest degree greater, this determines the question, even in matters of speculation; and in matters of practice, will lay us under an absolute and formal obligation, in point of prudence and of interest, to act upon that presumption or low probability, though it be so low as to leave the mind in very great doubt which is the truth. For surely a man is as really bound in prudence to do what upon the whole appears, according to the best of his judgment, to be for his happiness, as what he certainly knows to be so. Nay further, in questions of great consequence, a reasonable man will think it concerns him to remark lower probabilities and presumptions than these; such as amount to no more than showing one side of a question to be as supposable and credible as the other; nay, such as but amount to much less even than this. For numberless

[a] The story is told by Mr. Locke in the chapter of Probability.—[Essay on the Human Understanding, book iv., c. 15, s. 5.]

instances might be mentioned respecting the common pursuits of life, where a man would be thought, in a literal sense, distracted who would not act, and with great application too, not only upon an even chance, but upon much less, and where the probability or chance was greatly against his succeeding.[4]

B It is not my design to inquire further into the nature, the foundation, and measure of probability; or whence it proceeds that *likeness* should beget that presumption, opinion, and full conviction, which the human mind is formed to receive from it, and which it does necessarily produce in every one; or to guard against the errors, to which reasoning from analogy is liable. This belongs to the subject of Logic, and is a part of that subject which has not yet been thoroughly considered. Indeed, I shall not take upon me to say how far the extent, compass, and force of analogical reasoning can be reduced to general heads and rules, and the whole be formed into a system. But though so little in this way has been attempted by those who have treated of our intellectual powers and the exercise of them, this does not hinder but that we may be, as we unquestionably are, assured, that analogy is of weight, in various degrees, towards determining our judgment and our practice. Nor does it in any wise cease to be of weight in those cases, because persons,

[4] See chap. vi., part ii. [These remarks of Butler's on the prudence of (say) a religious course are quite just. Even if the doctrine of another life were improbable, it would be wise to live as if it were true. Men can lose nothing, and may gain much, by acting upon it. Still it must be remembered that, while prudence may guide our conduct, it cannot control our hearts. A religion adhered to from prudence alone is not the religion of Scripture. We need faith, and love, and hope—in one word, an inner life, as the spring of outward holiness; and all these the evidences and truths of Christianity are intended to supply. The remark of Professor Fitzgerald is, however, also true: "It is not inconceivable that the Almighty should require men first to act upon a thing, as true, before they are so fully satisfied of its truth as to leave no doubt remaining." It is also to be noted that Scripture speaks of religion itself as a form of prudence or thoughtfulness, Matt. xxv. 1. See Butler's own remarks on a similar topic in Part II., Chap. VIII. Prudence, according to Butler, implies the preference of interest to passion—itself a commendable decision.]

either given to dispute, or who require things to be stated with greater exactness than our faculties appear to admit of in practical matters, may find other cases in which it is not easy to say whether it be, or be not, of any weight; or instances of seeming analogies, which are really of none. It is enough to the present purpose to observe, that this general way of arguing is evidently natural, just, and conclusive. For there is no man can make a question but that the sun will rise to-morrow; and be seen, where it is seen at all, in the figure of a circle, and not in that of a square.

Hence, namely, from analogical reasoning, Origen[a] has, 2
with singular sagacity, observed, that *he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from him who is the Author of Nature,* a
may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in the constitution of Nature. And in a like way of reflection it may be added, that he who denies the Scripture to
have been from God upon account of these difficulties, may, b
for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed by him. On the other hand, if there be an analogy or likeness
between that system of things and dispensation of Provi- c
dence, which Revelation informs us of, and that system of things and dispensation of Providence, which experience together with reason informs us of, *i. e.*, the known course of Nature; this is a presumption, that they have both the same author and cause; at least so far as to answer objections against the former's being from God, drawn from anything

[a] Χρὴ μέν τοι γε τὸν ἅπαξ παραδεξάμενον τοῦ κτίσαντος τὸν κόσμον εἶναι ταύτας τὰς γραφὰς πεπεῖσθαι, ὅτι ὅσα περὶ τῆς κτίσεως ἀπαντᾷ τοῖς ζητοῦσι τὸν περὶ αὐτῆς λόγον, ταῦτα καὶ περὶ τῶν γραφῶν.—Philocal., p. 23, ed. Cant. [translated in the text.]

[This remark Origen applies in support of a questionable system of Biblical interpretation. In several instances, however, he applies analogy as Butler does in defence of the doctrines of the gospel. Christ's death in our stead—the treachery of Judas not inconsistent with our Lord's Divine mission—the heresies of the early church no evidence against the truth of Christianity—he illustrates by analogous facts (Cont. Cels., lib. i., ii., iii.) This kind of reasoning is common in the early apologists (see also especially Tertullian "On the Testimony of the Soul," and Athenagoras "On the Resurrection"), and abounds in the discourses of Plato, and even in the severer treatises of Aristotle.]

which is analogical or similar to what is in the latter, which is acknowledged to be from him: for an Author of Nature is here supposed.

3 Forming our notions of the constitution and government of the world upon reasoning, without foundation for the prin-
a ciples which we assume, whether from the attributes of God or anything else; is building a world upon hypothesis, like Des Cartes. Forming our notions upon reasoning from prin-
b ciples which are certain, but applied to cases to which we have no ground to apply them, (like those who explain the structure of the human body, and the nature of diseases and medicines from mere mathematics without sufficient *data*;) is an error much akin to the former: since what is assumed in order to make the reasoning applicable, is hypothesis. But it must be allowed just, to join abstract reasonings with the observation of facts, and argue from such facts as are known, to others that are like them; from that part of the Divine government over intelligent creatures which comes under our view, to that larger and more general government over them which is beyond it; and from what is present, to collect what is likely, credible, or not incredible, will be hereafter.

This method then of concluding and determining being practical, and what, if we will act at all, we cannot but act upon in the common pursuits of life; being evidently conclusive in various degrees, proportionable to the degree and exactness of the whole analogy or likeness; and having so great authority for its introduction into the subject of reli-
c gion, even revealed religion; my design is to apply it to that subject in general, both natural and revealed: taking for proved, that there is an intelligent Author of Nature, and natural Governor of the world. For as there is no presumption against this prior to the proof of it: so it has been often proved with accumulated evidence; from this argument of analogy and final causes; from abstract reasonings; from the most ancient tradition and testimony; and from the general consent of mankind. Nor does it appear, so far as I can find, to be denied by the generality of those who profess themselves dissatisfied with the evidence of religion.

d As there are some, who, instead of thus attending to what is in fact the constitution of Nature, form their notions of

God's government upon hypothesis: so there are others, who indulge themselves in vain and idle speculations,* how the world might possibly have been framed otherwise than it is: and upon supposition that things might, in imagining that they should have been disposed and carried on after a better model, than what appears in the present disposition and conduct of them. Suppose now a person of such a turn of mind, to go on with his reveries, till he had at length fixed upon some particular plan of Nature, as appearing to him the best. One shall scarce be thought guilty of detraction against human understanding, if one should say, even before-hand, that the plan which this speculative person would fix upon, though he were the wisest of the sons of men, probably would not be the very best, even according to his own notions of *best*; whether he thought that to be so, which afforded occasions and motives for the exercise of the greatest virtue, or which was productive of the greatest happiness, or that these two were necessarily connected, and run up into one and the same plan. However, it may not be amiss once for all to see, what would be the amount of these emendations and imaginary improvements upon the system of Nature, or how far they would mislead us. And it seems there could be no stopping till we came to some such conclusions as these: that all creatures should at first be made as perfect and as happy as they were capable of ever being: that nothing, to be sure, of hazard or danger should be put upon them to do; some indolent persons would perhaps think nothing at all: or certainly, that effectual care should be taken, that they should, whether necessarily or not, yet eventually and in fact, always do what was right and most conducive to happiness, which would be thought easy for infinite power to effect; either by not giving them any principles which would endanger their going wrong; or by laying the right motive of action in every instance before their minds continually in so strong a manner, as would never fail of inducing them to act conformably to it: and that the whole method of government by punishments should be re-

* [Professor Fitzgerald supposes that Butler had Bayle's Speculations in view when penning this paragraph. See Bayle's Notes to 'Manichæans,' and 'Origen' in his Critical Dictionary.]

jected as absurd; as an awkward round-about method of carrying things on; nay, as contrary to a principal purpose, for which it would be supposed creatures were made, namely, happiness.

3 Now, without considering what is to be said in particular to the several parts of this train of folly and extravagance; what has been above intimated, is a full direct general answer to it, namely, that we may see beforehand that we have not faculties for this kind of speculation. For though it be admitted, that, from the first principles of our nature, we unavoidably judge or determine some ends to be absolutely in

(a) themselves preferable to others, and that the ends now mentioned, or if they run up into one, that this one is absolutely the best; and consequently that we must conclude the ultimate end designed, in the constitution of Nature and conduct of Providence, is the most virtue and happiness possible: yet we are far from being able to judge what particular disposition of things would be most friendly and assistant to virtue;

(b) or what means might be absolutely necessary to produce the most happiness in a system of such extent as our own world may be, taking in all that is past and to come, though we should suppose it detached from the whole of things. Indeed we are so far from being able to judge of this, that we are not

(c) judges what may be the necessary means of raising and conducting one person to the highest perfection and happiness of his nature. Nay, even in the little affairs of the present

(d) life, we find men of different educations and ranks are not competent judges of the conduct of each other. Our whole nature leads us to ascribe all moral perfection to God, and to deny all imperfection of him. And this will for ever be a practical proof of his moral character, to such as will consider what a practical proof is; because it is the voice of God speaking in us. And from hence we conclude, that virtue must be the happiness, and vice the misery, of every creature; and that regularity and order and right cannot but prevail finally in a universe under his government. But we are in no sort judges, what are the necessary means of accomplishing this end.

6 Let us then, instead of that idle and not very innocent employment of forming imaginary models of a world, and schemes of governing it, turn our thoughts to what we ex-

perience to be the conduct of Nature with respect to intelli- 1
gent creatures; which may be resolved into general laws or
rules of administration, in the same way as many of the laws 2
of Nature respecting inanimate matter may be collected
from experiments. And let us compare the known constitu- 3
tion and course of things with what is said to be the moral system of Nature; the acknowledged dispensations of Providence, or that government which we find ourselves under, with what religion teaches us to believe and expect; and see whether they are not analogous and of a piece. And upon such a comparison it will, I think, be found, that they are very much so: that both may be traced up to the same general laws, and resolved into the same principles of Divine conduct.

The analogy here proposed to be considered is of a pretty 1
large extent, and consists of several parts, in some, more, in others, less, exact. In some few instances perhaps it may amount to a real practical proof; in others not so.[f] Yet in
these it is a confirmation of what is proved other ways. It 1
will undeniably show, what too many want to have shown them, that the system of Religion, both natural and revealed, considered only as a system, and prior to the proof of it, is
not a subject of ridicule, unless that of Nature be so too. 2
And it will afford an answer to almost all objections against the system both of natural and revealed Religion; though
not perhaps an answer in so great a degree, yet in a very 3
considerable degree an answer to the objections against the evidence of it: for objections against a proof, and objections against what is said to be proved, the reader will observe are different things.

Now the Divine government of the world, implied in the 1
notion of religion in general and of Christianity, contains in it; that mankind is appointed to live in a future state;[8] that there every one shall be rewarded or punished;[9] rewarded or punished respectively for all that behaviour here, which we comprehend under the words, virtuous or vicious, morally good or evil:[10] that our present life is a probation, a state of trial,[11] and of discipline,[12] for that future one; notwithstand

[f] [See Introductory Statements on Analogy.]
[8] Part I., chap i. [9] Chap. ii. [10] Chap. iii.
[11] Chap. iv. [12] Chap. v.

ing the objections, which men may fancy they have, from notions of necessity, against there being any such moral plan as this at all;[13] and whatever objections may appear to lie against the wisdom and goodness of it, as it stands so imperfectly made known to us at present:[14] that this world being in a state of apostasy and wickedness, and consequently of ruin, and the sense both of their condition and duty being greatly corrupted amongst men, this gave occasion for an additional dispensation of providence; of the utmost importance;[15] proved by miracles;[16] but containing in it many things appearing to us strange, and not to have been expected;[17] a dispensation of providence, which is a scheme or system of things;[18] carried on by mediation of a Divine person, the Messiah, in order to the recovery of the world;[19] yet not revealed to all men, nor proved with the strongest possible evidence of all those to whom it is revealed; but only to such a part of mankind, and with such particular evidence as the wisdom of God thought fit.[20] The design then of the following treatise will be to show, that the several parts principally objected against in this moral and Christian dispensation, including its scheme, its publication, and the proof which God has afforded us of its truth; that the particular parts principally objected against in this whole
a dispensation, are analogous to what is experienced in the constitution and course of Nature, or Providence; that the chief objections themselves which are alleged against the former, are no other than what may be alleged with like
b justness against the latter, where they are found in fact to be inconclusive; and that this argument from analogy is in general unanswerable, and undoubtedly of weight on the side of religion,[21] notwithstanding the objections which may seem
c to lie against it, and the real ground which there may be for difference of opinion, as to the particular degree of weight which is to be laid upon it. This is the general account of what may be looked for in the following Treatise. And I shall begin it with that which is the foundation of all our hopes and of all our fears; all our hopes and fears, which are of any consideration; I mean in a future life.

[13] Chap. vi. [14] Chap. vii. [15] Part ii., chap. i.
[16] Chap. ii. [17] Chap. iii. [18] Chap. iv.
[19] Chap. v. [20] Chap. vi., vii. [21] Chap. viii.

ANALOGY OF RELIGION

TO

THE CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE.

PART I.

OF NATURAL RELIGION.[1]

CHAPTER I.

OF A FUTURE LIFE.[2]

[A A future life is probable:

1 From similar changes already undergone in,
 a Ourselves, and in,
 b Other creatures—worms, birds, etc.

2 From our present powers, which are likely to *continue*, unless death destroy them. We *fear* death may, but there is no proof that it will.

[1] [The *first* part of this treatise, it must be carefully noted, discusses natural religion—such truths as may be learned from creation and providence; and the language used is generally such as an imperfect revelation of that kind suggests. The *second* part discusses revealed religion—such truths as may be learned from Nature, and are taught in Scripture, together with such as are peculiar to the Christian system.

The distinction between natural and revealed religion is itself very liable to be misapprehended. Some hold that there are not even the elementary truths of such a science as the religion of Nature. Others, overlooking the fact that "natural religion has had the opportunity of rekindling her faded taper by gospel light"

a Either from the nature of death. We know not what *it* is, nor do we know on what the *existence* of our powers (not their exercise) depends.

b Or from the analogy of Nature, which shows only that the *sensible proof* of our powers (not the powers themselves) may be destroyed; and gives presumptions on the other side, as above.

B Still men *imagine* death will *destroy* them. This imagination unfounded. Take the question in *three* forms:

1 Is death the *destruction* of *living beings*? No reason to think it is, for this supposes we are compounded, and so discerptible; but the contrary is probable, having metaphysical and experimental proofs.

a Metaphysical: consciousness is indivisible; so must the subject in which consciousness inheres: hence, our bodies are not the living being, nor is the matter in which the living being thinks. The living being may exist out of the body, may animate other bodies, and be as little affected by the dissolution of all these bodies, as of any other foreign matter (see note).

(Davison on Prophecy, p. 8), ascribe to it truths which it cannot claim. It is, moreover, at all times difficult to distinguish between the possible discoveries of reason and the "wisdom that is from above:" and good men are jealous of dishonouring the Holy Spirit by ascribing to unassisted reason what is due to his teaching. In studying this treatise, however, there need be no misgivings on these points. By natural religion Butler means simply such truths in relation to God (his character and government) and man (his duties and destiny) as *may* be learned from God's works and dealings—the pretensions of natural religion in this respect being set forth with much moderation and reserve. He holds, moreover, that, *in fact*, these truths were not learned in the first instance by unassisted reason, but that miraculous instruction was needed to teach men to perceive them (part ii., chap. vii.). At the same time such instruction no more destroys the proof of these truths from reason, than the admission of the authority of Euclid as a mathematician destroys the independent proof which reason gives of his demonstrations. Happily, if we admit an authentic and enlarged communication from God, our only business is to examine how far Nature leads us on in the same path, and how she confirms the evidence and illustrates the teaching of revelation.]

[2] [Though Butler reckons the doctrine of a future life among the truths of *natural* religion, he does so rather for the reasons stated

b Experimental: parts of the body (limbs) may be lost, the body be larger or smaller, or even entirely (though gradually) changed, and the *living being remain.* Note, moreover,

1 Even if man is material, still death may not destroy the elementary particles in which the living being inheres; and if not, death does not destroy him.

2 So, as the destruction of the *bodily* system (by gradual changes, by amputation) destroys not the living being, neither will the destruction of any other (say internal) system. Death, indeed, is a sudden not a gradual change, and the living being is affected by the body; but the first fact is not decisive, nor is the latter more true of the body than of other foreign matter that affects the soul.

3 The body has organs of perception, etc., which may be removed or destroyed without affecting the living being; so may all other organs—eye-glasses, wooden limbs—perception without organs, as in dreams. In those cases the organ is an instrument which may be laid aside; so the dissolution of matter or of organs is not the destruction of the being himself.

Obj. It may be objected, this applies to brutes, which must, therefore, be immortal, and moral too. To which answer,

a Be it so; brutes may have latent powers, which fit them to be immortal, and,

b It does not follow; brutes may have a natural immortality without any higher faculties; and God may dispose of them as he shall please.

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on p. 33, than from any conviction that the truth is taught clearly and impressively by Nature. A future life is *natural,* as he has shown; and yet if knowledge imply *proof* and *conviction,* then it must be admitted that, apart from revelation, there is no knowledge of that life, and that in the gospel alone it is revealed. Whately has proved the accuracy of this conclusion.—Essays on some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion, Essay 1. At the same time the expectation of another life (sometimes hope, generally fear) has always been stronger among nations without the Bible than any *evidence* they seem to have possessed would warrant. This expectation Douglas ascribes partly to tradition, and partly to the aptitude of the soul to receive this truth.—Truths of Religion, p. 22. Cicero ascribes it to the same cause—*omnium consensus, naturæ vox* (Tusc. Quest., i., § 15)—though holding that the truth none but a god could tell, while what was likest truth was extremely uncertain.]

2 Is death the destruction (not of the *living being*, but) of our present living powers of reflection, as it is of those of sensation?

a Man lives in two states—sensation, and perception or reflection.

b Ideas once gained, sensation may be destroyed and reflection remain untouched; for now,

1 We can and do reflect independently of the senses; and,

2 In mortal diseases reflection is unaffected up to the moment of death, and after sensation has ceased.

c Each state, indeed, affects the other; but the destruction of one thing which affects another is not necessarily the destruction of the two.

d Diseases even give a presumption to the contrary (see **B** b 2).

3 Is death even the suspension of our present powers of reflection? No; for,

a Such suspension is no part of the idea of death, which is simply dissolution of the body.

b Death may be like birth, a continuation and perfecting of our powers; and,

c At all events, suspension of powers and destruction so differ, that we cannot argue the second from the first.

Obj. Death is after all our destruction, as is clear from vegetable decay. But the things compared differ in the essential point of comparison—the possession of living powers of *perception*.

Repeat conclusion in a positive form.

C The future life here shown to be probable is *natural:*

1 We *enter* it naturally, by a change like our birth.

2 It is naturally *social*.

3 Ruled by natural *fixed* laws, according to virtue.

4 Nor less natural that these laws are administered by God, not by men, etc.

D This probable proof of a future life helps religion as much as demonstration would do; for,

1 Demonstration would not silence an unbeliever in religion, since his unbelief may admit a future life as it admits this; and,

2 Probable proof silences objections, and prepares the mind to attend to the proper evidence of religion.]

Strange difficulties have been raised by some concerning personal identity, or the sameness of living agents, implied

in the notion of our existing now and hereafter, or in any A
two successive moments; which whoever thinks it worth while, may see considered in the first dissertation at the end of this treatise. But without regard to any of them here, let us consider what the analogy of Nature, and the several changes which we have undergone, and those which we know we may undergo without being destroyed, suggest, as to the effect which death may, or may not, have upon us; and whether it be not from thence probable, that we may survive
this change, and exist in a future state of life and perception. 1

[I.] From our being born into the present world in the helpless imperfect state of infancy, and having arrived from thence to mature age, we find it to be a general law of Nature
in our own species, that the same creatures, the same indi- a
viduals, should exist in degrees of life and perception, with capacities of action, of enjoyment and suffering, in one period of their being, greatly different from those appointed them in another period of it. And in other creatures the
same law holds. For the difference of their capacities and b
states of life at their birth (to go no higher) and in maturity; the change of worms into flies, and the vast enlargement of their locomotive powers by such change: and birds and insects bursting the shell their habitation, and by this means entering into a new world, furnished with new accommodations for them, and finding a new sphere of action assigned them; these are instances of this general law of Nature. Thus all the various and wonderful transformations of animals are to be taken into consideration here. But the states of life in which we ourselves existed formerly in the womb and in our infancy, are almost as different from our present in mature age, as it is possible to conceive any two states or degrees of life can be. Therefore that we are to exist hereafter in a state as different (suppose) from our present, as this is from our former, is but according to the analogy of Nature; according to a natural order or appointment of the very same kind, with what we have already experienced.

[II.] We know we are endued with capacities of action, of happiness and misery: for we are conscious of acting, of
enjoying pleasure and suffering pain. Now, that we have 2
these powers and capacities before death, is a presumption

that we shall retain them through and after death; indeed a probability of it abundantly sufficient to act upon, unless there be some positive reason to think that death is the destruction of those living powers; because there is in every case a probability that all things will continue as we experience they are, in all respects, except those in which we have some reason to think they will be altered. This is that *kind*[3] of presumption or probability from analogy, expressed in the very word *continuance*, which seems our only natural reason for believing the course of the world will continue to-morrow, as it has done so far as our experience or knowledge of history can carry us back. Nay it seems our only reason for believing, that any one substance now existing will continue to exist a moment longer; the self-existent substance only excepted. Thus if men were assured that the unknown event, death, was not the destruction of our faculties of perception and of action, there would be no apprehension, that any other power or event, unconnected with this of death, would destroy these faculties just at the instant of each creature's death, and therefore no doubt but that they would remain after it; which shows the high probability that our living powers will continue after death, unless there be some ground to think that death is their destruction.[4] For, if it would be in a manner certain that we should survive death, provided it were certain that death would not be our destruction, it must be highly probable we

[3] I say *kind* of presumption or probability; for I do not mean to affirm that there is the same *degree* of conviction that our living powers will continue after death, as there is that our substances will.

[4] *Destruction of living powers* is a manner of expression unavoidably ambiguous, and may signify either *the destruction of a living being, so as that the same living being shall be incapable of ever perceiving or acting again at all:* or *the destruction of those means and instruments by which it is capable of its present life, of its present state of perception and of action.* It is here used in the former sense. When it is used in the latter, the epithet *present* is added. The loss of a man's eye is a destruction of living powers in the latter sense. But we have no reason to think the destruction of living powers, in the former sense, to be possible. We have no more reason to think a being endued with living powers ever loses them during its whole existence, than to believe that a stone ever acquires them.

shall survive it, if there be no ground to think death will be our destruction.[5]

Now though I think it must be acknowledged, that prior to the natural and moral proofs of a future life commonly insisted upon, there would arise a general confused suspicion, that in the great shock and alteration which we shall undergo by death, we, *i. e.* our living powers, might be wholly destroyed: yet even prior to those proofs, there is really no particular distinct ground or reason for this apprehension at all, so far as I can find. If there be, it must arise either from *the reason of the thing*, or from *the analogy of Nature*.

But we cannot argue from *the reason of the thing*, that death is the destruction of living agents, because we know not at all what death is in itself; but only some of its effects, such as the dissolution of flesh, skin, and bones. And these effects do in no wise appear to imply the destruction of a living agent. And besides, as we are greatly in the dark upon what the exercise of our living powers depends, so we are wholly ignorant what the powers themselves depend upon; the powers themselves are distinguished, not only from their actual exercise, but also from the present capacity of exercising them, and as opposed to their destruction; for sleep, or however a swoon, shows us, not only that these powers exist when they are not exercised, as the passive power of motion does in inanimate matter, but shows also that they exist, when there is no present capacity of exercising them; or that the capacities of exercising them for the present, as well as the actual exercise of them, may be

5 [The first and the second parts of this chapter illustrate very well the weakness and the strength of the analogical argument. For positive conclusions—the certainty, for example, of a future life—it fails to produce conviction. For negative conclusions—the futility, for example, of objections to a future life, founded on our fears, or on what death seems to be—it is triumphant. It is in reference to the first point in part that Dr. Chalmers holds this chapter "to be the least satisfactory in the book."—Lectures on Butler, p. 10. If, however, he adds, it be held as the main function of analogy not to supply-proofs, but to repel disproofs—then nothing can be imagined more effective or more beautiful than the illustrations of this part of Butler's work.]

suspended, and yet the powers themselves remain undestroyed. Since then we know not at all upon what the existence of our living powers depends, this shows further, there can no probability be collected from the reason of the thing, that death will be their destruction; because their existence may depend upon somewhat in no degree affected by death, upon somewhat quite out of the reach of this king
D of terrors. So that there is nothing more certain than that *the reason of the thing* shows us no connexion between death and the destruction of living agents. Nor can we find anything throughout the whole *analogy of Nature* to afford us even the slightest presumption that animals ever lose their living powers, much less, if it were possible, that they lose them by death; for we have no faculties wherewith to trace any beyond or through it, so as to see what becomes of them. This event removes them from our view. It destroys the *sensible* proof, which we had before their death, of their being possessed of living powers, but does not appear to afford the least reason to believe that they are then, or by that event, deprived of them.

And our knowing, that they were possessed of these powers, up to the very period to which we have faculties capable of tracing them, is itself a probability of their retaining them beyond it. And this is confirmed, and a sensible credibility is given to it, by observing the very great and astonishing changes which we have experienced; so great that our existence in another state of life, of perception, and of action, will be but according to a method of providential conduct, the like to which has been already exercised even with regard to ourselves, according to a course of Nature, the like to which we have already gone through.

However, as one cannot but be greatly sensible, how
B difficult it is to silence imagination enough to make the voice of reason even distinctly heard in this case; as we are accustomed from our youth up to indulge that forward delusive faculty, ever obtruding beyond its sphere; of some assistance indeed to apprehension, but the author of all error; as we plainly lose ourselves in gross and crude conceptions of things, taking for granted that we are acquainted with what, indeed, we are wholly ignorant of; it may be proper to consider the imaginary presumptions, that death will be

our destruction, arising from these kinds of early and lasting prejudices; and to show how little they can really amount to, even though we cannot wholly divest ourselves of them.[6] And,

[I.] All presumption of death's being the destruction of living beings, must go upon supposition that they are compounded, and so discerptible. But since consciousness is a single and indivisible power, it should seem that the subject in which it resides must be so too. For were the motion of any particle of matter absolutely one and indivisible, so as that it should imply a contradiction to suppose part of this motion to exist, and part not to exist, *i. e.* part of this matter to move, and part to be at rest; then its power of motion would be indivisible; and so also would the subject in which the power inheres, namely the particle of matter; for if this could be divided into two, one part might be moved and the other at rest, which is contrary to the supposition[7].

[6] [It must be carefully noted that the question here raised is divided by Butler into three: Is death the destruction of the *living* agent? or of his present powers of reflection? or is it even the suspension of those powers? See Outline. On the phraseology here employed, Dr. Hampden remarks that Butler "is often obliged to employ a circuitous and apparently awkward style in stating his arguments"—to avoid particular theories in relation to the subjects of them. "Hence his use of such expressions as 'faculties of perception and action,' 'living powers,' 'living agents,' etc., which, to be justly estimated, must be regarded as exclusions of any particular theory concerning the soul, so as to leave the question of a future life, as here entered into, purely a question of fact."—Essay on the Philosophical Evidences of Christianity. Pref. x.]

[7] [This argument—consciousness is indivisible, so therefore is the subject in which it inheres; but if the conscious subject is indivisible, it is also indestructible and immortal—was stated in 1705 (thirty years before the Analogy was published), by Dr. S. Clarke, and in nearly the same words (A Discourse concerning the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation, etc., Boyle's Lecture, p. 113). Dr. Thomas Brown has also expanded and enforced it with his usual eloquence (Lect. xcvi.) But it is now generally abandoned as inconclusive. Dugald Stewart intimates that if logical, it proves that the soul cannot have been *created*. It is clearer still that on this principle the elementary substances of Nature are indestructible. Mackintosh has remarked that *simple* properties some-

In like manner it has been argued,[8] and for anything appearing to the contrary justly, that since the perception or consciousness which we have of our own existence, is indivisible, so as that it is a contradiction to suppose one part of it should be here and the other there; the perceptive power, or the power of consciousness, is indivisible too; and consequently the subject in which it resides, *i. e.* the conscious being. Now upon supposition that living agent each man calls himself, is thus a single being, which there is at least no more difficulty in conceiving than in conceiving it to be a compound, and of which there is the proof now mentioned; it follows that our organized bodies are no more ourselves or part of ourselves than any other matter around us. And it is as easy to conceive how matter, which is no part of ourselves, may be appropriated to us in the manner which our present bodies are; as how we can receive impressions from, and have power over any matter. It is as easy to conceive that we may exist out of bodies, as in them; that we might have animated bodies of any other organs and senses wholly different from those now given us, and that we may hereafter animate these same or new bodies variously modified and organized, as to conceive how we can animate such bodies as our present. And lastly, the

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times exist in a compound substance, when not found in any of its constituent parts (Ethical Philosophy, p. 261, Whewell's ed.), whence it follows that the indivisibility of a property (as consciousness) is no proof of the indivisibility of the conscious substance. And, in a word, we know so little of the primary qualities or of the essence of matter and mind, that all reasoning based upon such knowledge is not only unsatisfactory, but peculiarly liable to be turned against the truth we are seeking to defend.—See Duke's Analysis of Butler, App. i.; Sir W. Hamilton's edition of Dr. Reid's Collected Works, Note D.]

[8] See Dr. Clarke's Letter to Mr. Dodwell, and the defences of it. [Dodwell, a learned nonjuror, fond of paradoxes, maintained that the human soul is naturally mortal, but is actually immortalized by God in baptism. He was answered by Clarke. Collins, the deist, then took up Dodwell's theory, dropping the theological question. A fourth letter, in reply, was written by Clarke, and so the dispute closed. All the letters were collected and published. The sixth and best edition is dated Lond., 1731. See also Hinton's Athanasia.]

dissolution of all these several organized bodies, supposing ourselves to have successively animated them, would have no more conceivable tendency to destroy the living beings ourselves, or deprive us of living faculties, the faculties of perception and of action, than the dissolution of any foreign matter, which we are capable of receiving impressions from and making use of for the common occasions of life.

[II.] The simplicity and absolute oneness of a living agent cannot indeed, from the nature of the thing, be properly proved by experimental observations. But as these *fall in* with the supposition of its unity, so they plainly lead us to *conclude* certainly that our gross organized bodies, with which we perceive the objects of sense, and with which we act, are no part of ourselves; and therefore show us that we have no reason to believe their destruction to be ours; even without determining whether our living substances be material or immaterial. For we see by experience that men may lose their limbs, their organs of sense, and even the greatest part of these bodies, and yet remain the same living agents. And persons can trace up the existence of themselves to a time when the bulk of their bodies was extremely small in comparison of what it is in mature age; and we cannot but think, that they might then have lost a considerable part of that small body, and yet have remained the same living agents; as they may now lose great part of their present body and remain so. And it is certain that the bodies of all animals are in a constant flux from that never-ceasing attrition, which there is in every part of them. Now things of this kind unavoidably teach us to distinguish between these living agents ourselves and large quantities of matter in which we are very nearly interested; since these may be alienated and actually are in a daily course of succession, and changing their owners, whilst we are assured that each living agent remains one and the same permanent being.[9] And this general observation leads us on to the following ones.

[9] [See Dissertation I., where the question of personal identity is formally discussed. In accordance with Butler's general practice, such discussions are excluded from his treatise, which is eminently practical. His phraseology is in the mean time as free from mere theory as possible.]

1 First. That we have no way of determining by experience what is the certain bulk of the living being each man calls himself; and yet till it be determined that it is larger in bulk than the solid elementary particles of matter, which there is no ground to think any natural power can dissolve, there is no sort of reason to think death to be the dissolution of it, of the living being, even though it should not be absolutely indiscerptible.

2 Secondly. From our being so nearly related to and interested in certain systems of matter, suppose our flesh and bones, and afterwards ceasing to be at all related to them, the living agents ourselves remaining all this while undestroyed notwithstanding such alienation; and consequently these systems of matter not being ourselves; it follows further that we have no ground to conclude any other, suppose *internal systems* of matter, to be the living agents ourselves, because we can have no ground to conclude this but from our relation to and interest in such other systems of matter; and therefore we can have no reason to conclude, what befalls those systems of matter at death, to be the destruction of the living agents. We have already several times over lost a great part or perhaps the whole of our body, according to certain common established laws of Nature, yet we remain the same living agents; when we shall lose as great a part, or the whole, by another common established law of Nature, death; why may we not always remain the same? That the alienation has been gradual in one case, and in the other will be more at once, does not prove anything to the contrary. We have passed undestroyed through those many and great revolutions of matter, so peculiarly appropriated to us ourselves; why should we imagine death will be so fatal to us? Nor can it be objected, that what is thus alienated or lost is no part of our original solid body, but only adventitious matter, because we may lose entire limbs which must have contained many solid parts and vessels of the original body; or if this be not admitted, we have no proof that any of these solid parts are dissolved or alienated by death. Though, by the way, we are very nearly related to that extraneous or adventitious matter, whilst it continues united to and distending the several parts of our solid body. But after all, the relation a person bears to

those parts of his body, to which he is the most nearly related, what does it appear to amount to but this, that the living agent, and those parts of the body, mutually affect each other? And the same thing, the same thing in kind though not in degree, may be said of *all foreign* matter, which gives us ideas, and which we have any power over. From these observations the whole ground of the imagination is removed, that the dissolution of any matter, is the destruction of a living agent, from the interest he once had in such matter.

Thirdly. If we consider our body somewhat more distinctly, as made up of organs and instruments of perception and of motion, it will bring us to the same conclusion. Thus the common optical experiments show, and even the observation how sight is assisted by glasses shows, that we see with our eyes in the same sense as we see with glasses. Nor is there any reason to believe, that we see with them in any other sense; any other, I mean, which would lead us to think the eye itself a percipient. The like is to be said of hearing; and our feeling distant solid matter by means of somewhat in our hand, seems an instance of the like kind as to the subject we are considering.[10] All these are instances of foreign matter, or such as is no part of our body, being instrumental in preparing objects for and conveying them to the perceiving power, in a manner similar or like to the manner in which our organs of sense prepare and convey them. Both are in a like way instruments of our receiving such ideas from external objects, as the Author of Nature appointed those external objects to be the occasions of exciting in us. However, glasses are evidently instances of this; namely of matter which is no part of our body, preparing objects for and conveying them towards the perceiving power, in like manner as our bodily organs do. And if we see with our eyes only in the same manner as we do with glasses, the like may justly be concluded, from analogy, of all our other senses. It is not intended by anything here said to affirm,

[10] [Fitzgerald quotes Plato, Alcib. Prim., s. 51, where the hands and eyes are distinguished as here from the *man* who uses them. "The mind sees, all else is deaf and blind," was a common Greek proverb.— Hamilton's Reid, p. 246.]

that the whole apparatus of vision, or of perception by any other of our senses, can be traced through all its steps quite up to the living power of seeing or perceiving; but that so far as it can be traced by experimental observations, so far it appears that our organs of sense prepare and convey on objects, in order to their being perceived, in like manner as foreign matter does, without affording any shadow of appearance that they themselves perceive. And that we have no reason to think our organs of sense percipients, is confirmed by instances of persons losing some of them, the living beings themselves, their former occupiers, remaining unimpaired. It is confirmed also by the experience of dreams; by which we find we are at present possessed of a latent and, what would otherwise be, an unimagined unknown power of perceiving sensible objects, in as strong and lively a manner without our external organs of sense as with them.

So also with regard to our power of moving, or directing motion by will and choice: upon the destruction of a limb this active power remains, as it evidently seems, unlessened; so as that the living being, who has suffered this loss, would be capable of moving as before, if it had another limb to move with. It can walk by the help of an artificial leg, just as it can make use of a pole or a lever, to reach towards itself and to move things beyond the length and the power of its natural arm; and this last it does in the same manner as it reaches and moves, with its natural arm things nearer and of less weight. Nor is there so much as any appearance of our limbs being endued with a power of moving or directing themselves; though they are adapted, like the several parts of a machine, to be the instruments of motion to each other, and some parts of the same limb to be instruments of motion to other parts of it.

Thus a man determines that he will look at such an object through a microscope; or being lame, suppose that he will walk to such a place with a staff a week hence. His eyes and his feet no more determine in these cases, than the microscope and the staff. Nor is there any ground to think they any more put the determination in practice, or that his eyes are the seers or his feet the movers, in any other sense than as the microscope and the staff are. Upon the whole

then our organs of sense and our limbs are certainly instruments, which the living persons ourselves make use of to perceive and move with; there is not any probability that they are any more, nor consequently that we have any other kind of relation to them, than what we may have to any other foreign matter formed into instruments of perception and motion, suppose into a microscope or a staff (I say any other kind of relation, for I am not speaking of the degree of it); nor consequently is there any probability that the alienation or dissolution of these instruments is the destruction of the perceiving and moving agent.

And thus our finding that the dissolution of matter, in which living beings were most nearly interested, is not their dissolution, and that the destruction of several of the organs and instruments of perception and of motion belonging to them is not their destruction, shows demonstratively that there is no ground to think that the dissolution of any other matter, or destruction of any other organs and instruments, will be the dissolution or destruction of living agents from the like kind of relation. And we have no reason to think we stand in any other kind of relation to any thing which we find dissolved by death.

But it is said these observations are equally applicable to brutes; and it is thought an insuperable difficulty that they should be immortal, and by consequence capable of everlasting happiness.[11] Now this manner of expression is both invidious and weak; but the thing intended by it is really no difficulty at all, either in the way of natural or

Obj.

[11] [The question of the immortality of brutes long perplexed the early defenders of the immortality of the soul.—See Bayle's Dictionary, articles Pereira and Rorarius. Clarke (in his reply to Collins), Thomas Burnet, and Andrew Baxter, and now Butler, meets the difficulty in the true form. "Brutes may, for aught we know, become rational agents, as infants do. If not, the system of the universe may require the future existence of brutes, as it requires the present; and after all there are other and stronger arguments for the future life of man which do not hold equally in the case of brutes." This is in substance the answer of all. Perhaps a still sounder argument is—Analogy (as to death) shows only that our immortality is *not improbable:* so of brute natures. The positive proofs must be gathered from other quarters.]

moral consideration. For first, suppose the invidious thing, designed in such a manner of expression, were really implied, as it is not in the least, in the natural immortality of brutes; namely, that they must arrive at great attainments, and become rational and moral agents, even this would be no difficulty; since we know not what latent powers and
a capacities they may be endued with. There was once, prior to experience, as great presumption against human creatures as there is against the brute creatures, arriving at that degree of understanding which we have in mature age. For we can trace up our own existence to the same original with theirs. And we find it to be a general law of Nature, that creatures endued with capacities of virtue and religion should be placed in a condition of being, in which they are altogether without the use of them for a considerable length of their duration, as in infancy and childhood. And great part of the human species go out of the present world, before they come to the exercise of these capacities in any degree at all. But then, secondly, the natural immortality of brutes does not in the least imply that they are endued with any latent capacities of a rational or moral nature. And the economy of the universe might require, that there
b should be living creatures without any capacities of this kind. And all difficulties as to the manner how they are to be disposed of are so apparently and wholly founded in our ignorance, that it is wonderful they should be insisted upon by any, but such as are weak enough to think they are acquainted with the whole system of things. There is then absolutely nothing at all in this objection, which is so rhetorically urged, against the greatest part of the natural proofs or presumptions of the immortality of human minds: I say the greatest part; for it is less applicable to the following observation, which is more peculiar to mankind:

2 [III]. That as it is evident our *present* powers and capacities of reason, memory, and affection do not depend upon our gross body in the manner in which perception by our organs of sense does; so they do not appear to depend upon it at all in any such manner, as to give ground to think that the dissolution of this body will be the destruction of these our *present* powers of reflection, as it will of our powers of

sensation; or to give ground to conclude, even that it will be so much as a suspension of the former.

Human creatures exist at present in two states of life and perception, greatly different from each other; each of which has its own peculiar laws, and its own peculiar enjoyments and sufferings. When any of our senses are affected or appetites gratified with the objects of them, we may be said to exist or live in a state of sensation. When none of our senses are affected or appetites gratified, and yet we perceive and reason, and act; we may be said to exist or live in a state of reflection. Now it is by no means certain, that any thing which is dissolved by death is any way necessary to the living being in this its state of reflection, after ideas are gained. For though, from our present constitution and condition of being, our external organs of sense are necessary for conveying in ideas to our reflecting powers, as carriages, and levers, and scaffolds are in architecture; yet when these ideas are brought in we are capable of reflecting in the most intense degree, and of enjoying the greatest pleasure and feeling the greatest pain, by means of that reflection, without any assistance from our senses; and without any at all, which we know of, from that body which will be dissolved by death. It does not appear then that the relation of this gross body to the reflecting being is, in any degree, necessary to thinking, to our intellectual enjoyments or sufferings; nor, consequently, that the dissolution or alienation of the former by death will be the destruction of those present powers, which render us capable of this state of reflection. Further, there are instances of mortal diseases which do not at all affect our present intellectual powers; and this affords a presumption that those diseases will not destroy these present powers. Indeed, from the observations made above,[14] it appears that there is no presumption, from their mutually affecting each other, that the dissolution of the body is the destruction of the living agent. And by the same reasoning, it must appear too that there is no presumption, from their mutually affecting each other, that the dissolution of the body is the destruction of our present reflecting powers; but instances of their not affecting each

[14] Pp. 24, 25, 26.

other afford a presumption of the contrary. Instai mortal diseases not impairing our present reflecting p evidently turn our thoughts even from imagining diseases to be the destruction of them. Several indeed greatly affect all our living powers, and at suspend the exercise of them, as for instance drow increasing till it ends in sound sleep; and from her might have imagined it would destroy them, till we by experience the weakness of this way of judging. the diseases now mentioned, there is not so much a shadow of probability to lead us to any such conclus to the reflecting powers which we have at present. those diseases, persons the moment before death app be in the highest vigour of life. They discover apprehe memory, reason, all entire, with the utmost force of tion; sense of a character, of shame and honour; ar highest mental enjoyments and sufferings, even to th gasp; and these surely prove even greater vigour of lif bodily strength does. Now what pretence is the thinking, that a progressive disease when arrived to s degree, I mean that degree which is mortal, will de those powers which were not impaired, which wer affected by it, during its whole progress quite up to degree? And if death by diseases of this kind is no destruction of our present reflecting powers, it will s be thought that death by any other means is.

3 It is obvious that this general observation may be ca on further; and there appears so little connexion bet our bodily powers of sensation, and our present powe reflection, that there is no reason to conclude that d which destroys the former, does so much as suspen exercise of the latter, or interrupt our *continuing* to ex the like state of reflection which we do now. For su sion of reason, memory, and the affections which the cite, is no part of the idea of death, nor is implied in notion of it. And our daily experiencing these powe be exercised, without any assistance that we know of, those bodies which will be dissolved by death, and our ing often that the exercise of them is so lively to the th-se things afford a sensible apprehension that death ps be so much as a discontinuance of the exe

of these powers, nor of the enjoyments and sufferings which it implies.[13] So that our posthumous life, whatever there may be in it additional to our present, yet may not be entirely beginning anew, but going on. Death may, in some sort and in some respects, answer to our birth; which is not a suspension of the faculties which we had before it, or a total change of the state of life in which we existed when in the womb, but a continuation of both, with such and such great alterations.

Nay, for aught we know of ourselves, of our present life and of death; death may immediately, in the natural course of things, put us into a higher and more enlarged state of life as our birth does;[14] a state in which our capacities, and sphere of perception and of action, may be much greater than at present. For as our relation to our external organs of sense renders us capable of existing in our present state of sensation, so it may be the only natural hindrance to our existing, immediately and of course, in a higher state of reflection. The truth is, reason does not at all show us in what state death naturally leaves us. But were we sure that it would suspend all our perceptive and active powers, yet the suspension of a power and the destruction of it are

[13] There are three distinct questions relating to a future life here considered: Whether death be the destruction of living agents; if not, Whether it be the destruction of their *present* powers of reflection, as it certainly is the destruction of their present powers of sensation; and if not, Whether it be the suspension or discontinuance of the exercise of these present reflecting powers. Now, if there be no reason to believe the last, there will be, if that were possible, less for the next, and less still for the first.

[14] This, according to Strabo, was the opinion of the Brachmans, νομίζειν μὲν γὰρ δὴ τὸν μὲν ἐνθάδε βίον, ὡς ἂν ἀκμὴν κυομένων εἶναι· τὸν δὲ θάνατον, γένεσιν εἰς τὸν ὄντως βίον, καὶ τὸν εὐδαίμονα τοῖς φιλοσοφήσασι.—Lib. xv., p. 1039, ed. Amst., 1707. ["They considered the life which now is as an embryo state, and death as birth into true life—the perfect blessedness of philosophers."] To which opinion perhaps Antoninus may allude in these words: ὡς νῦν περιμένεις, πότε ἔμβρυον ἐκ τῆς γαστρὸς τῆς γυναικός σου ἐξέλθῃ, οὕτως ἐκδέχεσθαι τὴν ὥραν ἐν ᾗ τὸ ψυχάριόν σου τοῦ ἐλύτρου τούτου ἐκπεσεῖται.—Lib. ix., c. 3. ["As thou once camest, an embryo from the womb, so art thou now waiting for the hour when thy soul shall get free from its present integument."]

effects so totally different in kind, as we experience from sleep and a swoon, that we cannot in any wise argue from one to the other; or conclude even to the lowest degree of probability that the same kind of force which is sufficient to suspend our faculties, though it be increased ever so much, will be sufficient to destroy them.

Obj. These observations together may be sufficient to show, how little presumption there is, that death is the destruction of human creatures. However, there is the shadow of an analogy, which may lead us to imagine it is; the supposed likeness which is observed between the decay of vegetables, and of living creatures.[15] And this likeness is indeed sufficient to afford the poets very apt allusions to the flowers of the field, in their pictures of the frailty of our present life. But in reason, the analogy is so far from holding, that there appears no ground even for the comparison, as to the present question; because one of the two subjects compared is wholly void of that, which is the principal and chief thing in the other, the power of perception and of action; and which is the only thing we are inquiring about the continuance of. So that the destruction of a vegetable is an event not similar or analogous to the destruction of a living agent.

Concl. But if, as was above intimated, leaving off the delusive custom of substituting imagination in the room of experience, we would confine ourselves to what we do know and understand; if we would argue only from that, and from that form our expectations; it would appear at first sight, that as no probability of living beings ever ceasing to be so, can be concluded from the reason of the thing; so none can be collected from the analogy of Na-

[15] [Butler's answer to this objection is conclusive. The things are *not* analogous in the essential points of comparison. Vegetable life is not at all like the power of perception and action possessed by moral agents. It will be remembered, however, that between the death of the *body* and of vegetable substance there is some resemblance, and that the apostle Paul uses this resemblance to illustrate the resurrection of the dead: "The seed dies; the germ, however, remains, and gathers to itself the materials of a new frame," 1 Cor. xv. 36. There is a good explanation of this resemblance in Hitchcock's Sermons on the Seasons, Serm. 1.]

ture; because we cannot trace any living beings beyond death. But as we are conscious that we are endued with capacities of perception and of action, and are living persons; what we are to go upon is, that we shall continue so, till we foresee some accident or event, which will endanger those capacities, or be likely to destroy us: which death does in no wise appear to be.

And thus, when we go out of this world, we may pass C
into new scenes, and a new state of life and action, just as
naturally as we came into the present. And this new state 1
may naturally be a social one. And the advantages of it, 2
advantages of every kind, may naturally be bestowed, ac-
cording to some fixed general laws of wisdom, upon every 3
one in proportion to the degrees of his virtue. And though
the advantages of that future natural state should not be
bestowed, as these of the present in some measure are, by
the will of the society, but entirely by His more immediate
action, upon whom the whole frame of Nature depends; yet
this distribution may be just as natural, as their being dis- 4
tributed here by the instrumentality of men. And indeed, though one were to allow any confused undetermined sense, which people pleased to put upon the word *natural*, it would be a shortness of thought scarce credible, to imagine, that no system or course of things can be so, but only what we see at present:[1] especially whilst the probability of a future life, or the natural immortality of the soul, is admitted upon the evidence of reason; because this is really both admitting and denying at once, a state of being different from the present to be natural. But the only distinct meaning of that word is, *stated*, *fixed*, or *settled*; since what is natural, as much requires and presupposes an intelligent agent to render it so, *i. e.* to effect it continually, or at stated times; as what is supernatural or miraculous does to effect it for once. And from hence it must follow, that persons' notion of what is natural, will be enlarged in proportion to their greater knowledge of the works of God, and the dispensations of his providence. Nor is there any absurdity in supposing, that there may be beings in the universe, whose capacities, and knowledge, and views, may be so extensive,

[16] See Part II , chap. ii., and Part II., chap. iii.

as that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural, *i. e.* analogous or conformable to God's dealings with other parts of his creation; as natural as the visible known course of things appears to us. For there seems scarce any other possible sense to be put upon the word, but that only in which it is here used; similar, stated, or uniform.

D This credibility of a future life, which has been here insisted upon, how little soever it may satisfy our curiosity,
1 seems to answer all the purposes of religion, in like manner as a demonstrative proof would. Indeed a proof, even a demonstrative one, of a future life, would not be a proof of religion. For, that we are to live hereafter, is just as reconcilable with the scheme of atheism, and as well to be accounted for by it, as that we are now alive is; and therefore nothing can be more absurd than to argue from that scheme, that there can be no future state. But as religion implies a future state, any presumption against such a state,
2 is a presumption against religion. And the foregoing observations remove all presumptions of that sort, and prove, to a very considerable degree of probability, one fundamental doctrine of religion; which if believed, would greatly open and dispose the mind seriously to attend to the genera evidence of the whole.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD BY REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS; AND PARTICULARLY OF THE LATTER.[1]

[INTRODUCTION. A future life is probable (chap. i.), and important, because (chap. ii.) our happiness in it may depend on our present conduct; *i.e.*, we are under government. Consider that we are under government generally; and, under government by *punishment*, as well as by rewards.

A Under government generally: *i. e.*,

1 Our present happiness and misery depend on our behaviour.

a Life is preserved through care.

b The possession of external good depends on exertion, and

c Enjoyment and misery are consequences of rashness, passion neglect, and their opposites.

Obj. 1 One may ask why, and wish that God had given happiness promiscuously, but, in answer, remember

a Such an arrangement may be impossible.

b The present plan may produce more happiness than any other.

c God's goodness may be a disposition to make (not all but only) the good happy.

d The *goodness* of moral agents may be more pleasing to God and better for the universe than mere happiness.

e The reason may be to us incomprehensible—as colours to the blind; and

[1] [Carefully mark that, in chap. ii., Butler is speaking of government simply, *not* of moral government, which is the subject of chap. iii." "Acts have consequences, and those consequences are foreseen," is the argument here: "*virtuous* acts have *happy* consequences, and those consequences are foreseen," is the argument in the *next* chapter. . . Professor Fitzgerald has appropriately remarked, that in the outset of this argument, we have an answer to all who regard religion as a mere *theory*. It belongs not to speculation, but to those practical matters on which our condition compels us to make up our minds one way or other. The Creator is not only the first Cause of all, he is moral Governor; and our eternal destiny is suspended upon our treatment of his claims.]

f At all events the *fact* is (whatever the reason), that happiness and misery do depend upon ourselves.

Obj. 2 One may object that these consequences of behaviour follow (and are therefore to be ascribed to) the course of Nature. Yes; but

a The *course of Nature* means *God* acting uniformly; and, if so, and our *foresight* of the course is his gift, then

b We ascribe all to God, and deem our foresight a warning and inducement given by him. It may be asked indeed,

c Whether, in every case, the pleasure following an act proves that God intended us so to act, and the answer is, No. It is a pleasant thing to behold the sun, and yet thereby the eye *may be* destroyed. The general truth, however, remains.

2 The knowledge that happiness depends on our behaviour is of the essence of government, which is simply annexing consequences to acts, and giving notice of the arrangement.

a Nor is it important that God should himself, and immediately execute his laws. They may execute themselves.

b Even the lesser pains and pleasures which follow acts are instances of proper government; nor can this be denied without denying all final causes, of which such pains are examples.

Conclusion. Hence, if told that God will reward and punish hereafter, still attaching consequences to acts, such a statement is in harmony with the whole present course of Nature, and so credible.

B We are under government by *punishment now*, and so may be *hereafter*.

1 Present punishments are analogous to future, of which religion (not only *revealed* but natural) speaks, in various respects:

a Both follow actions of present advantage or pleasure.

b They are often greater than the advantage or pleasure obtained by the acts they punish.

c They are often long delayed and yet come.

d They often come not gradually but suddenly.

e They are never *certainly* foreseen, and seldom thought of at the time of the act.

f Opportunities once lost are never recalled.

g They are often, after a time, beyond alleviation by repentance.

h They follow neglect or thoughtlessness as well as passion, and

i They are sometimes final and irremediable.

2 Further note concerning them

a That they are not accidental or occasional, but matters of daily experience.
b The present and the future are so analogous that both may be described in the same words. Prov. chap. i.
c So close is the analogy, that when once a future punishment is proved (by its proper evidence), nothing can so fully impress it on the mind as to note the facts above named.
d Present punishments, however, are not always, it must be admitted, in proportion to misbehaviour; still they are sufficient
  1 To answer objections founded either on the imagination that our frailty or temptation will excuse us; that we are *necessary* agents, and so guiltless; or that God is incapable of offence; and
  2 To create a serious apprehension of future punishment, and to rebuke presumption, scepticism, false security, and licentiousness.]

THAT which makes the question concerning a future life to be of so great importance to us, is our capacity of happiness and misery. And that which makes the consideration of it to be of so great importance to us, is the supposition of our happiness and misery hereafter, depending upon our actions here. Without this, indeed, curiosity could not but sometimes bring a subject, in which we may be so highly interested, to our thoughts; especially upon the mortality of others, or the near prospect of our own. But reasonable men would not take any further thought about hereafter, than what should happen thus occasionally to rise in their minds, if it were certain that our future interest no way depended upon our present behaviour; whereas on the contrary, if there be ground, either from analogy or any thing else, to think it does; then there is reason also for the most active thought and solicitude, to secure that interest; to behave so as that we may escape that misery, and obtain that happiness in another life, which we not only suppose ourselves capable of, but which we apprehend also is put in our own power. And whether there be ground for this last apprehension, certainly would deserve to be most seriously considered, were there no other INTRO.

proof of a future life and interest, than that presumptive
A one, which the foregoing observations amount to.

1 Now in the present state, all which we enjoy, and a great
part of what we suffer, *is put in our own power*. For plea-
sure and pain are the consequences of our actions; and
we are endued by the Author of our nature with capa-
cities of foreseeing these consequences. We find by expe-
a rience He does not so much as preserve our lives, exclusively
of our own care and attention, to provide ourselves with,
and to make use of, that sustenance, by which he has ap-
pointed our lives shall be preserved; and without which,
he has appointed, they shall not be preserved at all. And
in general we foresee, that the external things, which are
the objects of our various passions, can neither be obtained
b nor enjoyed, without exerting ourselves in such and such
manners: but by thus exerting ourselves, we obtain and
enjoy these objects, in which our natural good consists; or
by this means God gives us the possession and enjoyment of
them. I know not, that we have any one kind or degree of
enjoyment, but by the means of our own actions. And by
prudence and care, we may, for the most part, pass our
days in tolerable ease and quiet: or, on the contrary, we
may, by rashness, ungoverned passion, wilfulness, or even
c by negligence, make ourselves as miserable as ever we
please. And many do please to make themselves extremely
miserable, *i. e.* to do what they know beforehand will
render them so. They follow those ways, the fruit of which
they know, by instruction, example, experience, will be dis-
grace, and poverty, and sickness, and untimely death. This
every one observes to be the general course of things;
though it is to be allowed, we cannot find by experience,
that all our sufferings are owing to our own follies.

Obj. 1. Why the Author of Nature does not give his crea-
tures promiscuously such and such perceptions, without
regard to their behaviour; why he does not make them
happy without the instrumentality of their own actions,
and prevent their bringing any sufferings upon themselves;
a is another matter. Perhaps [2] there may be some impossibili-

[2] [‘*Perhaps.*’ In this paragraph “Butler makes a fine display of
true philosophic modesty. He undertakes no absolute defence of

ties in the nature of things, which we are unacquainted
with.[3] Or less happiness, it may be, would upon the whole
be produced by such a method of conduct, than is by the b
present. Or perhaps Divine goodness, with which, if I
mistake not, we make very free in our speculations, may
not be a bare single disposition to produce happiness; but c
a disposition to make the good, the faithful, the honest man
happy. Perhaps an infinitely perfect Mind may be pleased,
with seeing his creatures behave suitably to the nature
which he has given them; to the relations which he has
placed them in to each other; and to that, which they stand
in to himself: that relation to himself, which, during their
existence, is even necessary, and which is the most im-
portant one of all: perhaps, I say, an infinitely perfect
Mind may be pleased with this moral piety of moral
agents, in and for itself; as well as upon account of d
its being essentially conducive to the happiness of his
creation. Or the whole end, for which God made, and
thus governs the world, may be utterly beyond the e
reach of our faculties: there may be somewhat in it as
impossible for us to have any conception of, as for a blind
man to have a conception of colours. But however this be,
it is certain matter of universal experience, that the general f
method of Divine administration is, forewarning us, or giving
us capacities to foresee, with more or less clearness, that if
we act so and so, we shall have such enjoyments, if so and
so, such sufferings; and giving us those enjoyments, and
making us feel those sufferings, in consequence of our actions.

God's administration, but proposes a series of conjectures, which, like the queries of Sir Isaac Newton, express rather the confessions of ignorance than any disposition to press into mysteries which are yet unknown to us."—*Chalmers' Lectures*, p. 18. For Butler's purpose this style of reasoning is as remarkable for wisdom as it is humble. Even philosophy, however, has not scrupled to affirm that the arrangement which makes our happiness dependent upon our behaviour is the best that could be devised (Leibnitz), and essential to our moral agency (Wayland). The Christian, with the Bible in his hand, maintains that this dependence, and even the sin which it brings with it, redounds to God's glory; that is, to the display of his love and holiness in the highest possible degree.]

[3] Chap. vii.

Obj. 2. "But all this is to be ascribed to the general course of Nature." True. This is the very thing which I am observing. It is to be ascribed to the general course of
a Nature: *i. e.* not surely to the words or ideas, *course of Nature*; but to Him who appointed it, and put things into it: or to a course of operation, from its uniformity or constancy, called natural;[4] and which necessarily implies an operating agent. For when men find themselves necessitated to confess an Author of Nature, or that God is the natural governor of the world; they must not deny this again, because his government is uniform; they must not deny that he does things at all, because he does them constantly; because the effects of his acting are permanent, whether his acting be so or not.[5] In short, every man, in every thing he does, naturally acts upon the forethought and
b apprehension of avoiding evil or obtaining good: and if the natural course of things be the appointment of God, and our natural faculties of knowledge and experience are given us by him; then the good and bad consequences which follow our actions, are his appointment, and our foresight of those consequences, is a warning given us by him, how we are to act.

[4] Chap. i. pp. 33, 34.

[5] [Butler here hints (as Professor Fitzgerald notes) at what is sometimes called the *mechanical* theory of the universe: a theory analogous to that of a *general* without a *particular* Providence. This theory maintains that the frame of the universe is a mechanism having its own fixed laws, and requiring no interposition on God's part beyond the original act of creation. The forces of Nature are, on this supposition, in material things themselves, as particular providence is, on a similar supposition, only general laws working out the destiny of individuals. Clarke (whom Butler seems to follow) denied the theory, in opposition to Leibnitz. Scripture is clearly against it, and (it may be added) modern science, in its investigations into the doctrine of causation, seems in favour of the conclusion, that the great forces of the universe are put forth immediately by God himself.

It must be carefully noted, however, that Butler thinks a world governed by forces imparted at first, and no longer needing direct interposition, may be as completely under God's government as if he were continually interposing. See p. 41. Herein he agrees with Leibnitz against Clarke. See Fitzgerald, note, p. 46.]

"Is the pleasure then, naturally accompanying every particular gratification of passion, intended to put us upon gratifying ourselves in every such particular instance, and as a reward to us for so doing?" No certainly. Nor is it to be said, that our eyes were naturally intended to give us the sight of each particular object, to which they do or can extend; objects which are destructive of them, or which, for any other reason, it may become us to turn our eyes from. Yet there is no doubt, but that our eyes were intended for us to see with. So neither is there any doubt, but that the foreseen pleasures and pains belonging to the passions, were intended, in general, to induce mankind to act in such and such manners.

Now from this general observation, obvious to every one, that God has given us to understand, he has appointed satisfaction and delight to be the consequence of our acting in one manner, and pain and uneasiness of our acting in another, and of our not acting at all; and that we find the consequences, which we were beforehand informed of, uniformly to follow; we may learn, that we are at present actually under his government in the strictest and most proper sense; in such a sense, as that he rewards and punishes us for our actions. An Author of Nature being supposed, it is not so much a deduction of reason, as a matter of experience, that we are thus under his government: under his government, in the same sense, as we are under the government of civil magistrates. Because the annexing pleasure to some actions, and pain to others, in our power to do or forbear, and giving notice of this appointment beforehand to those whom it concerns, is the proper formal notion of government. Whether the pleasure or pain which thus follows upon our behaviour be owing to the Author of Nature's acting upon us every moment which we feel it, or to his having at once contrived and executed his own part in the plan of the world, makes no alteration as to the matter before us. For if civil magistrates could make the sanctions of their laws take place, without interposing at all, after they had passed them; without a trial, and the formalities of an execution: if they were able to make their laws execute themselves, or every offender to execute them upon himself, we should be just in the same sense under their

government then as we are now, but in a much higher degree and more perfect manner. Vain is the ridicule with which one foresees some persons will divert themselves upon finding lesser pains considered as instances of Divine punish-
b ment. There is no possibility of answering or evading the general thing here intended, without denying all final causes. For final causes being admitted, the pleasures and pains now mentioned must be admitted too as instances of them. And if they are—if God annexes delight to some actions, and uneasiness to others, with an apparent design to induce us to act so and so, then he not only dispenses happiness and misery, but also rewards and punishes actions. If, for example, the pain which we feel upon doing what tends to the destruction of our bodies, suppose upon too near approaches to fire, or upon wounding ourselves, be appointed by the Author of Nature to prevent our doing what thus tends to our destruction, this is altogether as much an instance of his punishing our actions, and consequently of our being under his government, as declaring by a voice from heaven that if we acted so he would inflict such pain upon us, and inflicting it, whether it be greater or less.

CONCL. Thus we find,[6] that the true notion or conception of the Author of Nature is that of a master or governor, prior to the consideration of his moral attributes. The fact of our case, which we find by experience, is, that he actually exercises dominion or government over us at present, by rewarding and punishing us for our actions, in as strict and proper a sense of these words, and even in the same sense, as children, servants, subjects, are rewarded and punished by those who govern them.

And thus the whole analogy of Nature, the whole present course of things, most fully shows that there is nothing incredible in the general doctrine of religion, that God will

[6] [These two paragraphs give the argument of this part of the chapter. An economy—in which actions are followed by foreseen pleasures and pains, and which are therefore fitted to induce some acts and deter from others—is really a government: and that is the economy of this life. Nor is there anything unnatural or incredible in the supposition that such an economy will prevail in the life to come.]

reward and punish men for their actions hereafter: nothing incredible, I mean, arising out of the notion of rewarding and punishing. For the whole course of Nature is a present instance of his exercising that government over us, which implies in it rewarding and punishing.

But as Divine punishment is what men chiefly object against, and are most unwilling to allow, it may be proper to mention some circumstances in the natural course of punishments at present, which are analogous to what religion teaches us concerning a future state of punishment, indeed so analogous, that as they add a further credibility to it, so they cannot but raise a most serious apprehension of it in those who will attend to them.

It has been now observed, that such and such miseries naturally follow such and such actions of imprudence and wilfulness, as well as actions more commonly and more distinctly considered as vicious; and that these consequences, when they may be foreseen, are properly natural punishments annexed to such actions. For the general thing here insisted upon is not that we see a great deal of misery in the world, but a great deal which men bring upon themselves by their own behaviour, which they might have foreseen and avoided. Now the circumstances of these natural punishments particularly deserving our attention, are such as these:[7] That oftentimes they follow, or are inflicted in consequence of actions, which procure many present advantages, and are accompanied with much present pleasure; for

[7] [This paragraph on present and future punishments "presents us with one of the finest triumphs of the analogical argument, in which its power as a weapon of defence appears to great advantage—cutting down as with a scythe a whole army of objections which are most frequent in the mouths of adversaries, being not only plausible in themselves, but most formidable in point of effect, from a certain tone of generous denunciation against all arbitrary and tyrannical rule in which they are propounded. . . . They do not of themselves constitute the argument by which to uphold natural theology or the Christian revelation, but they level to the ground many of the strongest and likeliest defences which the enemies of religion have to rear in opposition to the argument."—*Chalmers*.]

instance, sickness and untimely death is the consequence o
intemperance, though accompanied with the highest mirt
b and jollity: That these punishments are often much greate
than the advantages or pleasures obtained by the actions c
which they are the punishments or consequences: Tha
though we may imagine a constitution of Nature in whic
these natural punishments, which are in fact to follov
would follow immediately upon such actions being done, c
very soon after, we find on the contrary in our world, that the
c are often delayed a great while, sometimes even till lon
after the actions occasioning them are forgot; so that tl
constitution of Nature is such, that delay of punishment
no sort nor degree of presumption of final impunity: Th
after such delay, these natural punishments or miseri
d often come, not by degrees, but suddenly, with violence, a
at once; however, the chief misery often does: That
certainty of such distant misery following such actions
never afforded persons, so perhaps during the actions th
have seldom a distinct full expectation of its following;[a] a
many times the case is only thus, that they see in gener
or may see, the credibility, that intemperance, suppose, v
e bring after it diseases; civil crimes, civil punishmen
when yet the real probability often is, that they sh
escape; but things notwithstanding take their desti
course, and the misery inevitably follows at its appoin
time, in very many of these cases. Thus also though yo
may be alleged as an excuse for rashness and folly, as be
naturally thoughtless, and not clearly foreseeing all the c
sequences of being untractable and profligate; this does
hinder, but that these consequences follow, and are g
vously felt throughout the whole course of mature
Habits contracted even in that age, are often utter r
and men's success in the world, not only in the com
sense of worldly success, but their real happiness and mis
depends in a great degree, and in various ways, upon
manner in which they pass their youth; which conseque
they for the most part neglect to consider, and perhaps
dom can properly be said to believe, beforehand. It req
also to be mentioned, that in numberless cases the na

[a] See Part ii. chap. vi.

course of things affords us opportunities for procuring
advantages to ourselves at certain times, which we cannot
procure when we will, nor ever recall the opportunities, if f
we have neglected them. Indeed the general course of
Nature is an example of this. If, during the opportunity of
youth, persons are indocile and self-willed, they inevitably
suffer in their future life, for want of those acquirements
which they neglected the natural season of attaining. If
the husbandman lets his seed-time pass without sowing, the
whole year is lost to him beyond recovery. In like manner,
though after men have been guilty of folly and extravagance
up to a certain degree, it is often in their power, for instance,
to retrieve their affairs, to recover their health and character,
at least in good measure: yet real reformation is, in many
cases, of no avail at all towards preventing the miseries, po-
verty, sickness, infamy, naturally annexed to folly and extra- g
vagance *exceeding that degree*. There is a certain bound to
imprudence and misbehaviour, which being transgressed,
there remains no place for repentance in the natural course
of things. It is further very much to be remarked, that h
neglects from inconsiderateness, want of attention,* not
looking about us to see what we have to do, are often at-
tended with consequences altogether as dreadful as any active
misbehaviour from the most extravagant passion. And
lastly, civil government being natural, the punishments of i
it are so too: and some of these punishments are capital, as
the effects of a dissolute course of pleasure are often mortal.
So that many natural punishments are final‖ to him who

* Chap. vi. part ii.

‖ The general consideration of a future state of punishment most evidently belongs to the subject of natural religion. But if any of these reflections should be thought to relate more peculiarly to this doctrine, as taught in Scripture, the reader is desired to observe, that Gentile writers, both moralists and poets, speak of the future punishment of the wicked, both as to the duration and degree of it, in a like manner of expression and of description, as the Scripture does. So that all which can positively be asserted to be matter of mere revelation with regard to this doctrine, seems to be, that the great distinction between the righteous and the wicked, shall be made at the end of this world; that each shall *then* receive according to his deserts. Reason did,

incurs them, if considered only in his temporal capacity, and seem inflicted by natural appointment, either to remove the offender out of the way of being further mischievous, or as an example, though frequently a disregarded one, to those who are left behind.

2 These things are not what we call accidental, or to be met
a with only now and then, but they are things of every day's experience: they proceed from general laws, very general ones, by which God governs the world in the natural course
b of his providence. And they are so analogous to what religion teaches us concerning the future punishment of the wicked, so much of a piece with it, that both would naturally be expressed in the very same words and manner of description. In the book of *Proverbs*,[u] for instance, Wisdom is introduced as frequenting the most public places of resort, and as rejected when she offers herself as the natural appointed guide of human life. *How long*, speaking to those who are passing through it, *how long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.* But upon being neglected, *Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but*

as it well might, conclude that it should, finally and upon the whole, be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked: but it could not be determined upon any principles of reason, whether human creatures might not have been appointed to pass through other states of life and being, before that distributive justice should finally and effectually take place. Revelation teaches us that the next state of things after the present is appointed for the execution of this justice; that it shall be no longer delayed; but *the mystery of God*, the great mystery of his suffering vice and confusion to prevail, *shall then be finished;* and he will *take to him his great power and will reign*, by rendering to every one according to his works. [See Lucretius, i. 107–112.]

[u] Chap. i.

I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. This passage, every one sees, is poetical, and some parts of it are highly figurative; but their meaning is obvious. And the thing intended is expressed more literally in the following words: *For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:—therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the security of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* And the whole passage is so equally applicable to what we experience in the present world concerning the consequences of men's actions, and to what religion teaches us is to be expected in another, that it may be questioned which of the two was principally intended.

Indeed when one has been recollecting the proper proofs c
of a future state of rewards and punishments, nothing methinks can give one so sensible an apprehension of the latter, or representation of it to the mind, as observing, that after the many disregarded checks, admonitions and warnings, which people meet with in the ways of vice and folly and extravagance; warnings from their very nature; from the examples of others; from the lesser inconveniences which they bring upon themselves; from the instructions of wise and virtuous men: after these have been long despised, scorned, ridiculed; after the chief bad consequences, temporal consequences of their follies, have been delayed for a great while, at length they break in irresistibly, like an armed force: repentance is too late to relieve, and can serve only to aggravate their distress: the case is become desperate; and poverty and sickness, remorse and anguish, infamy and death, the effects of their own doings, overwhelm them beyond possibility of remedy or escape. This is an account of what is in fact the general constitution of Nature.

It is not in any sort meant, that according to what appears d
at present of the natural course of things, men are always uniformly punished in proportion to their misbehaviour: but that there are very many instances of misbehaviour punished in the several ways now mentioned, and very dreadful instances too, sufficient to show what the laws of the universe may admit; and, if thoroughly considered, sufficient fully to answer all objections against the credibility

of a future state of punishments, from any imaginations that the frailty of our nature and external temptations almost annihilate the guilt of human vices; as well as objections of another sort, from necessity; from suppositions that the will of an infinite Being cannot be contradicted, or that he must be incapable of offence and provocation.[12]

Reflections of this kind are not without their terrors to serious persons, the most free from enthusiasm, and of the greatest strength of mind; but it is fit things be stated and considered as they really are. And there is, in the present age, a certain fearlessness with regard to what may be hereafter under the government of God, which nothing but an universally acknowledged demonstration on the side of atheism can justify; and which makes it quite necessary that men be reminded, and if possible made to feel, that there is no sort of ground for being thus presumptuous, even upon the most sceptical principles. For, may it not be said of any person upon his being born into the world, he may behave so as to be of no service to it, but by being made an example of the woful effects of vice and folly? That he may, as any one may, if he will, incur an infamous execution from the hands of civil justice; or in some other course of extravagance shorten his days; or bring upon himself infamy and diseases worse than death? So that it had been better for him, even with regard to the present world, that he had never been born. And is there any pretence of reason for people to think themselves secure, and talk as if they had certain proof that, let them act as licentiously as they will, there can be nothing analogous to this, with regard to a future and more general interest, under the providence and government of the same God?

CHAPTER III.[*]

OF THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

[In chapter ii. the fact of *natural* government was proved. Here it is intended to prove that we are under *moral* government.

[12] See chap. iv. and vi.

A Introductory remarks on moral government generally, and the evidence to be adduced.

1 *Moral* government implies the rewarding of *virtue* and the punishment of vice; perfect moral government, an exact distribution of each.

2 Some hold that the character of God is that of *simple benevolence.* But this is not probable; for

a This supposes that moral conduct is not regarded for its own sake, and so gives no place for *veracity* and justice, except as forms of benevolence;

b And though perhaps God is purely benevolent to holy beings, yet he is *to us* as we see, a Governor, and so a moral one.

3 It is admitted that the moral government of God here is not perfect. The business of this chapter is to ascertain how far it exists, and what are likely to be its results.

4 It is not intended to reason here from the presages of conscience, nor from the nature of things, nor from the greater degree of happiness of virtue over vice (which it is difficult to estimate), but on other grounds.

B A moral government, present and future, is argued from the following facts:

1 God is a Governor, as we have seen (ch. ii.), and so probably a moral Governor. Such a conclusion at least falls in with our sense of things.

2 Prudence and imprudence (lower forms of virtue and vice), are rewarded and punished; and this is a moral arrangement.

3 Vice is punished, as mischievous to society, by penalties, and by the fear of them (itself a kind of punishment).

a This punishment, moreover, is natural; and

b Of God's appointment; and though

c It may be objected to that sometimes good actions are punished (as in persecution): yet note

1 That such punishment is in no sense necessary to society, and so not natural; and

2 Good actions are never punished, considered as such, out through mistake, as the contrary.

4 Vice is punished *as vice*, and virtue rewarded *as virtue.* Where note

a This statement implies that an action may have one effect, and the *quality* of an action another (gain, for example, as gain, brings pleasure: gain, as dishonest gain, brings misery).

b It affirms that virtue brings advantages to the virtuous, and vice evils to the vicious; and the following are examples.

1 In our own temper virtue produces peace; vice, vexation and self-reproach; and that these feelings are owing to the quality of the actions is plain; for, etc.

2 Nor ought the *present* fear of future punishment to be left out of this view, and the present peace in prospect of future happiness.

3 In common life, also, virtue has rewards, and vice punishment; a virtuous man being befriended because of his character, and in public life advantages are the natural rewards of fidelity, patriotism, etc., as such; while external annoyances often follow vice.

4 In domestic government, children and others are rewarded for veracity, etc., as such; and punished for falsehood, as such.

5 In civil government, though law regards actions chiefly, yet the viciousness of the actor, or the opposite, will often secure the infliction of the penalty, or induce men to remit it.

c The conclusion to which these facts lead is that, as our moral nature is a proof that we are under moral government, and will be finally treated as responsible, so examples justify this reasoning, and prove an existing moral government now.

d If it be asked, whence it is that virtue is rewarded and vice punished, and that this rule is not reversed, answer, it is because

1 Virtue brings present satisfaction to our own minds; and

2 With this moral nature God has made our happiness depend largely upon one another; so that vice, being infamous, brings punishment. Nor is there any such regard for injustice and falsehood as for their opposites. If examples can be quoted to the contrary, they are felt by all to be monstrous perversions.

e Not, indeed, that the degrees of reward given to virtue are always proportionate to it; but *it is* rewarded, and vice punished; so much is clear.

f It is admitted, also, that sometimes happiness and misery are distributed according to *other rules*. But this is explained; for, 1, It may be as mere discipline. 2, It may be the result of the operation of general laws, which may render persons prosperous, though wicked. 3, It is, after all, not a natural arrangement, since we intuitively expect the opposite. 4, It will be found to be owing, in many cases, to the perversion of some passion.

g From the whole it is plain that this arrangement is a declaration, upon God's part, that he is on the side of virtue, which assurance is itself a fresh source of comfort to the good man.

5 In the nature of things there is a tendency in virtue and vice to *greater* rewards and punishments than at present; which tendencies are a strong argument in favour of a perfect moral government *in the future.*

This tendency is seen in *individuals*; for virtue would be more fully rewarded, and vice punished, but for accidental causes; and in *society*, where power under the direction of virtue has a tendency to prevail over power not under its direction; as power with reason is stronger than power without it. This, however, needs to be explained.

a Power with reason will conquer power without it, not necessarily, but commonly, under certain conditions;

1, There must be some proportion between the two powers. 2, Union among those who possess rational power. 3, Time and scope for the development of rational power. Sometimes, however, want of reason will succeed. 4, From its inability to foresee danger. 5, From its attempting, through ignorance, what prudence would avoid. 6, From certain conjunctures of weakness and discord. 7, From the force of a union based upon instinct, and free from the divisions which the passions of rational beings sometimes produce.

b So, with regard to virtue, it has a tendency to prevail through the union of the good for the sake of justice and veracity.

That this tendency is natural, and the hindrances to it accidental, may be shown, either

1 By looking at the *whole universe*, where, the visible and the invisible being supposed analogous, virtue will finally prevail; as is shown by the analogous case of reason; provided, however, the same conditions be fulfilled. See above, a, 1, 2, 3–7.

Obj. This tendency, indeed, is hindered, but it is by causes which are accidental, and are likely to be removed in a future state, which will give the requisite scope for the operation of virtue, etc.

This supposition of a boundless universe, and virtue triumphant throughout, is only a supposition, but it is credible.

2 Or by looking at a human society, perfectly virtuous and united, and working for a succession of ages (indefinite time, not as before, indefinite space).

(a) At home, such a society would certainly prosper; and
(b) Abroad, it would become the basis of a universal kingdom.

c Hence these tendencies are a distinct testimony, upon God's part, to morality and virtue; a testimony of great importance, if it be considered what the effect would be if vice had the advantageous tendency of virtue, and virtue the opposite.

C The application of this analogy to a future moral government is obvious. It may, indeed, be objected at the outset

a That good and evil may hereafter be mixed as now: Answer, 1, The nature of that future life belongs to religion, which it is not here intended to prove, but only to confirm the proper proof of it. 2, Even if these facts did not confirm that proof, the proof itself remains in all its force.

b But these facts confirm the proper proof of religion in various ways. 1, They show that God is in favour of virtue, and against vice. 2, They show that future perfect moral government will be the completion of what has already begun; differing from the present, not in kind, but only in degree. 3, They give reason to a hope that virtue MA more highly rewarded, and vice more severely punis in the next life than in this; and they even, 4, reason to conclude that these rewards and punishm *will* exist in a higher degree than here.

D On the whole, conclude that, besides arguments drawn from moral nature, the eternal relations of things, the fitness actions, there are arguments for a present moral governme and for a future perfect moral government, based upon fa B 1—5. The notion, therefore, of such a future government natural, and even probable.]

As the manifold appearances of design and of final causes, the constitution of the world, prove it to be the work of a intelligent Mind; so the particular final causes of pleasu and pain distributed amongst his creatures, prove that the are under his government; what may be called his natur government of creatures, endued with sense and reaso This, however, implies somewhat more than seems usuall attended to, when we speak of God's natural government of the world. It implies government of the very same kind

with that, which a master exercises over his servants, or a civil magistrate over his subjects. These latter instances of final causes, as really prove an intelligent *Governor* of the world, in the sense now mentioned, and before[1] distinctly treated of; as any other instances of final causes prove an intelligent *Maker* of it.

But this alone does not appear at first sight to determine any thing certainly, concerning the moral character of the Author of Nature, considered in this relation of governor; does not ascertain his government to be moral, or prove that
he is the righteous Judge of the world. Moral government 1
consists, not barely in rewarding and punishing men for their actions, which the most tyrannical person may do: but in rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked; in rendering to men according to their actions, considered as good or evil. And the perfection of moral government consists in doing this, with regard to all intelligent creatures, in an exact proportion to their personal merits or demerits.

Some men seem to think the only character of the Author 2
of Nature to be that of simple absolute benevolence. This, considered as a principle of action and infinite in degree, is a disposition to produce the greatest possible happiness, without regard to persons' behaviour, otherwise than as such regard would produce higher degrees of it. And supposing this to be the only character of God, veracity and justice in him would be nothing but benevolence conducted by wisdom. Now surely this ought not to be asserted, unless it can be
proved; for we should speak with cautious reverence upon 3
such a subject. And whether it can be proved or no, is not the thing here to be inquired into; but whether in the constitution and conduct of the world, a righteous government be not discernibly planned out, which necessarily implies a righteous governor. There may possibly be in the creation, beings, to whom the Author of Nature manifests himself
under this most amiable of all characters, this of infinite 4
absolute benevolence; for it is the most amiable, supposing it not, as perhaps it is not, incompatible with justice: but he manifests himself to us under the character of a righteous Governor. He may, consistently with this, be simply and

[1] Chap. ii.

absolutely benevolent, in the sense now explained: but he is, for he has given us a proof in the constitution and conduct of the world that he is a Governor over servants, as he rewards and punishes us for our actions. And in the constitution and conduct of it, he may also have given, besides the reason of the thing, and the natural presages of conscience, clear and distinct intimations, that his government is righteous or moral: clear to such as think the nature of it deserving their attention; and yet not to every careless person, who casts a transient reflection upon the subject.[2]

3 But it is particularly to be observed, that the Divine government, which we experience ourselves under in the present state, taken alone, is allowed not to be the perfection of moral government. And yet this by no means hinders, but that there may be somewhat, be it more or less, truly moral in it. A righteous government may plainly appear to be carried on to some degree: enough to give us the apprehension that it shall be completed, or carried on to that degree of perfection which religion teaches us it shall; but which cannot appear, till much more of the Divine administration be seen, than can in the present life. And the design of this chapter is to inquire how far this is the case: how far, over and above the moral nature[3] which God has given us, and our natural notion of him as righteous governor of those his creatures, to whom he has given this nature;[4] I say how far besides this, the principles and beginnings of a moral government over the world may be discerned, notwithstanding and amidst all the confusion and disorder of it.

4 Now one might mention here, what has been often urged

[2] The objections against religion, from the evidence of it not being universal, nor so strong as might possibly have been, may be urged against natural religion, as well as against revealed. And, therefore, the consideration of them belongs to the first part of this Treatise, as well as the second. But as these objections are chiefly urged against revealed religion, I chose to consider them in the second part. And the answer to them there, chap. vi., as urged against Christianity, being almost equally applicable to them as urged against the religion of Nature; to avoid repetition, the reader is referred to that chapter.

[3] Dissertation II., [and Sermons on Human Nature.]

[4] Chap. vi.

with great force, that in general, less uneasiness and more satisfaction, are the natural consequences[a] of a virtuous than of a vicious course of life, in the present state, as an instance of a moral government established in Nature; an instance of it, collected from experience and present matter of fact. But it must be owned a thing of difficulty to weigh and balance pleasures and uneasinesses, each amongst themselves, and also against each other, so as to make an estimate with any exactness, of the overplus of happiness on the side of virtue. And it is not impossible, that, amidst the infinite disorders of the world, there may be exceptions to the happiness of virtue; even with regard to those persons, whose course of life from their youth up has been blameless; and more with regard to those who have gone on for some time in the ways of vice, and have afterwards reformed. For suppose an instance of the latter case; a person with his passions inflamed, his natural faculty of self-government impaired by habits of indulgence, and with all his vices about him, like so many harpies, craving for their accustomed gratification: who can say how long it might be, before such a person would find more satisfaction in the reasonableness and present good consequences of virtue, than difficulties and self-denial in the restraints of it? Experience also shows, that men can, to a great degree, get over their sense of shame, so as that by professing themselves to be without principle, and avowing even direct villany, they can support themselves against the infamy of it. But as the ill actions of any one will probably be more talked of, and oftener thrown in his way, upon his reformation; so the infamy of them will be much more felt, after the natural sense of virtue and of honour is recovered. Uneasiness of this kind ought indeed to be put to the account of former vices: yet it will be said, they are in part the consequences of reformation. Still I am far from allowing it doubtful, whether virtue, upon the whole, be happier than

[a] See Lord Shaftesbury's Inquiry concerning Virtue, Part II. [Lord Shaftesbury's demonstration of the utility of virtue to the individual is one of the most conclusive ever given, being founded not on outward advantage, but on the inward delight which is the very essence of affection and moral excellence. Love is its own reward and hatred its own punishment: a sentiment expanded by Dr. Chalmers. Bridgew. Treat., p. 1, c. ii.]

vice in the present world. But if it were, yet the beginnings of a righteous administration may beyond all question be found in Nature, if we will attentively inquire after them. And,

3 I. In whatever manner the notion of God's moral govern-
1 ment over the world might be treated, if it did not appear, whether he were in a proper sense our Governor at all: yet when it is certain matter of experience, that he does manifest himself to us under the character of a Governor, in the sense explained;[6] it must deserve to be considered, whether there be not reason to apprehend, that he may be a righteous or moral Governor. Since it appears to be fact, that God does govern mankind by the method of rewards and punishments, according to some settled rules of distribution, it is surely a question to be asked, What presumption is there against his finally rewarding and punishing them according to this particular rule, namely, as they act reasonably or unreasonably, virtuously or viciously? since rendering men happy or miserable by this rule, certainly falls in, much more falls in, with our natural apprehensions and sense of things, than doing so by any other rule whatever: since rewarding and punishing actions by any other rule, would appear much harder to be accounted for, by minds formed as he has formed ours. Be the evidence of religion then more or less clear, the expectation which it raises in us, that the righteous shall, upon the whole, be happy, and the wicked miserable, cannot, however, possibly be considered as absurd or chimerical; because it is no more than an expectation, that a method of government already begun, shall be carried on, the method of rewarding and punishing actions; and shall be carried on by a particular rule, which unavoidably appears to us at first sight more natural than any other, the rule which we call distributive justice. Nor,

2 II. Ought it to be entirely passed over, that tranquillity, satisfaction, and external advantages, being the natural consequences of prudent management of ourselves, and our affairs; and rashness, profligate negligence, and wilful folly, bringing after them many inconveniences and sufferings; these afford instances of a right constitution of Nature: as the correction of children, for their own sakes, and by way

6 Chapter ii.

of example, when they run into danger or hurt themselves, is a part of right education. And thus, that God governs the world by general fixed laws, that he has endued us with capacities of reflecting upon this constitution of things, and foreseeing the good and bad consequences of our behaviour; plainly implies some sort of moral government: since from such a constitution of things it cannot but follow, that prudence and imprudence, which are of the nature of virtue and vice,[7] must be, as they are, respectively rewarded and punished.

III. From the natural course of things, vicious actions 3
are, to a great degree, actually punished as mischievous to society; and besides punishment actually inflicted upon this account, there is also the fear and apprehension of it in those persons whose crimes have rendered them obnoxious to it, in case of a discovery; this state of fear being itself often a very considerable punishment. The natural fear and apprehension of it too, which restrains from such crimes, is a declaration of Nature against them. It is necessary to the very being of society, that vices destructive of it, should be punished *as being so*: the vices of falsehood, injustice, cruelty:
which punishment therefore is as natural as society; and so a
is an instance of a kind of moral government, naturally established, and actually taking place. And, since the certain natural course of things is the conduct of Providence or the government of God, though carried on by the instrumentality of men; the observation here made amounts to this, that
mankind find themselves placed by him in such circum- b
stances, as that they are unavoidably accountable for their behaviour, and are often punished, and sometimes rewarded under his government, in the view of their being mischievous, or eminently beneficial to society.

If it be objected that good actions, and such as are bene- c
ficial to society, are often punished, as in the case of persecution and in other cases; and that ill and mischievous actions are often rewarded:[8] it may be answered distinctly; first, that this is in no sort necessary, and consequently not

[7] See Dissertation II.

[8] [Not only are ill actions sometimes rewarded, but before Butler's time Mandeville had maintained that certain private vices (as luxury, vanity, ostentation, etc.) are public benefits. It is even

1 natural, in the sense in which it is necessary, and therefore natural, that ill or mischievous actions should be punished: and in the next place, that good actions are never punished,
2 considered as beneficial to society, nor ill actions rewarded, under the view of their being hurtful to it. So that it stands good, without anything on the side of vice to be set over against it, that the Author of Nature has as truly directed, that vicious actions, considered as mischievous to society, should be punished, and put mankind under a necessity of thus punishing them; as he has directed and necessitated us to preserve our lives by food.

4 IV. In the natural course of things, virtue *as such* is actually rewarded, and vice *as such* punished: which seems to afford an instance or example, not only of government, but of moral government, begun and established; moral in the strictest sense; though not in that perfection of degree, which religion teaches us to expect. In order to see this
a more clearly, we must distinguish between actions themselves, and that quality ascribed to them, which we call virtuous or vicious. The gratification itself of every natural passion must be attended with delight: and acquisitions of fortune, however made, are acquisitions of the means or materials of enjoyment. An action then, by which any natural passion is gratified or fortune acquired, procures delight or advantage; abstracted from all consideration of the morality of such action. Consequently, the pleasure or advantage in this case, is gained by the action itself, not by the morality, the virtuousness or viciousness of it; though it be, perhaps, virtuous or vicious. Thus, to say such an action or course of behaviour, procured such pleasure or advantage, or brought on such inconvenience and pain, is quite a different thing from saying that such good or bad effect was

sometimes said that without luxury art would find no encouragement, and labour, in many departments, no reward. Warburton (Divine Legation, Bk. 1, § 6) and others (Law, Browne on the Characteristics, Whately, Pol. Ec.) have formally refuted this notion. But even if it be admitted, Butler's reasoning is still just. These vices are not rewarded as hurtful to society, but on the supposition that they are useful to it. Mandeville deems the vice of luxury a benefit, only because he thinks it conducive to poverty, and poverty to morality (Whately, Pol. Ec., p. 48); a confirmation, it will be noticed, of Butler's statement.]

owing to the virtue or vice of such action or behaviour. In one case, an action abstracted from all moral consideration, produced its effect: in the other case, for it will appear that there are such cases, the morality of the action, the action under a moral consideration, *i. e.* the virtuousness or viciousness of it, produced the effect. Now I say virtue as such, naturally procures considerable advantages to the virtuous, and vice as such, naturally occasions great inconvenience and even misery to the vicious in very many instances. The immediate effects of virtue and vice upon the mind and temper, are to be mentioned as instances of it. Vice as such is naturally attended with some sort of uneasiness, and, not uncommonly, with great disturbance and apprehension. That inward feeling, which, respecting lesser matters, and in familiar speech, we call being vexed with oneself, and in matters of importance and in more serious language, remorse; is an uneasiness naturally arising from an action of a man's own, reflected upon by himself as wrong, unreasonable, faulty, *i. e.* vicious in greater or less degrees: and this manifestly is a different feeling from that uneasiness, which arises from a sense of mere loss or harm. What is more common, than to hear a man lamenting an accident or event, and adding —but however he has the satisfaction that he cannot blame himself for it; or on the contrary, that he has the uneasiness of being sensible it was his own doing? Thus also the disturbance and fear, which often follow upon a man's having done an injury, arise from a sense of his being blameworthy; otherwise there would, in many cases, be no ground of disturbance, nor any reason to fear resentment or shame.[a] On the other hand, inward security and peace, and a mind open to the several gratifications of life, are the natural attendants of innocence and virtue. To which must be added the complacency, satisfaction, and even joy of heart, which accompany the exercise, the real exercise, of gratitude, friendship, benevolence.

And here, I think, ought to be mentioned the fears of future punishment, and peaceful hopes of a better life, in

[a] [Pagan writers frequently refer to the effects of a sense of guilt. See Lucr. iii. 1024—1035. So Plato, Resp. i. § 5. See Homer, Il., 2. 200.]

those who fully believe, or have any serious apprehensions of religion: because these hopes and fears are present uneasiness and satisfaction to the mind, and cannot be got rid of by great part of the world, even by men who have thought most thoroughly upon that subject of religion. And no one can say how considerable this uneasiness and satisfaction may be, or what upon the whole it may amount to.

In the next place comes in the consideration, that all honest and good men are disposed to befriend honest good men as such, and to discountenance the vicious as such, and do so in some degree; indeed in a considerable degree, from which favour and discouragement cannot but arise considerable advantage and inconvenience. And though the generality of the world have little regard to the morality of their own actions, and may be supposed to have less to that of others, when they themselves are not concerned; yet let any one be known to be a man of virtue, somehow or other he will be favoured, and good offices will be done him, from regard to his character, without remote views, occasionally, and in some low degree, I think, by the generality of the world, as it happens to come in their way. Public honours too and advantages are the natural consequences, are sometimes at least the consequences in fact, of virtuous actions; of eminent justice, fidelity, charity, love to our country, considered in the view of being virtuous. And sometimes even death itself, often infamy and external inconveniences, are the public consequences of vice as vice. For instance, the sense which mankind have of tyranny, injustice, oppression, additional to the mere feeling or fear of misery, has doubtless been instrumental in bringing about revolutions, which make a figure even in the history of the world. For it is plain men resent injuries as implying faultiness, and retaliate, not merely under the notion of having received harm, but of having received wrong; and they have this resentment in behalf of others as well as of themselves. So likewise even the generality are, in some degree, grateful and disposed to return good offices, not merely because such an one has been the occasion of good to them, but under the view that such good offices implied kind intention and good desert in the doer. To all this may be added two or three particular things, which many persons will think frivolous; but to me

nothing appears so, which at all comes in towards determining a question of such importance as whether there be or be not a moral institution of government, in the strictest sense moral, *visibly* established and begun in Nature. The particular things are these: That in domestic government, which is doubtless natural, children and others also are very generally punished for falsehood and injustice and ill-behaviour, as such, and rewarded for the contrary; which are instances where veracity, and justice, and right behaviour as such are naturally enforced by rewards and punishments, whether more or less considerable in degree: That though civil government be supposed to take cognizance of actions in no other view than as prejudicial to society, without respect to the immorality of them; yet as such actions are immoral, so the sense which men have of the immorality of them very greatly contributes, in different ways, to bring offenders to justice: and that entire absence of all crime and guilt in the moral sense, when plainly appearing, will almost of course procure, and circumstances of aggravated guilt prevent, a remission of the penalties annexed to civil crimes, in many cases, though by no means in all.

Upon the whole then, besides the good and bad effects of virtue and vice upon men's own minds, the course of the world does, in some measure, turn upon the approbation and disapprobation of them as such in others. The sense of well and ill-doing, the presages of conscience, the love of good characters and dislike of bad ones, honour, shame, resentment, gratitude; all these, considered in themselves and in their effects, do afford manifest real instances of virtue as such naturally favoured, and of vice as such discountenanced, more or less, in the daily course of human life; in every age, in every relation, in every general circumstance of it. That God has given us a moral nature[10] may most justly be urged as a proof of our being under his moral government: but that he has placed us in a condition which gives this nature, as one may speak, scope to operate, and in which it does unavoidably operate; *i. e.* influence mankind to act, so as thus to favour and reward virtue, and discountenance and punish vice; this is not the same, but a further additional proof of his moral government: for it is an instance

[10] See Dissertation II., [and Sermons.]

of it. The first is a proof, that he will finally favour and support virtue effectually; the second is an example of his favouring and supporting it at present, in some degree.

d If a more distinct inquiry be made, whence it arises that virtue as such is often rewarded, and vice as such is punished, and this rule never inverted, it will be found to proceed, in part, immediately from the moral nature itself which God has given us; and also in part from his having given us, together with this nature, so great a power over each other's
1 happiness and misery. For, *first*, it is certain that peace and delight, in some degree and upon some occasions, is the necessary and present effect of virtuous practice; an effect arising immediately from the constitution of our nature. We are so made, that well-doing as such gives us satisfaction, at least in some instances; ill-doing as such in none. And *secondly*, from our moral nature, joined with God's having put our happiness and misery in many respects in each other's power, it cannot but be, that vice as such, some kinds and instances of it at least, will be infamous, and men
2 will be disposed to punish it as in itself detestable; and the villain will by no means be able always to avoid feeling that infamy, any more than he will be able to escape this further punishment which mankind will be disposed to inflict upon him under the notion of his deserving it. But there can be nothing on the side of vice to answer this, because there is nothing in the human mind contradictory, as the logicians speak, to virtue. For virtue consists in a regard to what is right and reasonable, as being so; in a regard to veracity, justice, charity, in themselves: and there is surely no such thing as a like natural regard to falsehood, injustice, cruelty. If it be thought that there are instances of an approbation of vice, as such, in itself, and for its own sake (though it does not appear to me that there is any such thing at all; but supposing there be) it is evidently monstrous; as much so as the most acknowledged perversion of any passion whatever. Such instances of perversion then being left out as merely imaginary, or however unnatural, it must follow, from the frame of our nature, and from our condition in the respects now described, that vice cannot at all be, and virtue cannot but be favoured as such by others, upon some occa-
3 sions, and happy in itself in some degree. For what is here

insisted upon is not the degree in which virtue and vice are thus distinguished, but only the thing itself, that they are so in some degree; though the whole good and bad effect of virtue and vice as such is not inconsiderable in degree. But that they must be thus distinguished in some degree is in a manner necessary; it is matter of fact of daily experience, even in the greatest confusion of human affairs.

It is not pretended but that in the natural course of things happiness and misery appear to be distributed by other rules than only the personal merit and demerit of characters. They may sometimes be distributed by way of mere discipline. There may be the wisest and best reasons why the world should be governed by general laws, from whence such promiscuous distribution perhaps must follow; and also why our happiness and misery should be put in each other's power in the degree which they are. And these things, as in general they contribute to the rewarding virtue and punishing vice as such, so they often contribute also, not to the inversion of this, which is impossible; but to the rendering persons prosperous, though wicked; afflicted, though righteous; and, which is worse, to the *rewarding some actions*, though vicious, and *punishing other actions*, though virtuous. But all this cannot drown the voice of Nature in the conduct of providence, plainly declaring itself for virtue, by way of distinction from vice, and preference to it. For our being so constituted as that virtue and vice are thus naturally favoured and discountenanced, rewarded and punished respectively as such, is an intuitive proof of the intent of Nature that it should be so; otherwise the constitution of our mind, from which it thus immediately and directly proceeds, would be absurd. But it cannot be said, because virtuous actions are sometimes punished and vicious actions rewarded, that Nature intended it. For though this great disorder is brought about, as all actions are done, by means of some natural passion, yet *this may be*, as it undoubtedly is, brought about by the perversion of such passion implanted in us for other, and those very good purposes. And indeed these other and good purposes, even of every passion, may be clearly seen.

We have then a declaration, in some degree of present effect, from Him who is supreme in Nature, which side he

is of, or what part he takes: a declaration for virtue and against vice. So far therefore as a man is true to virtue, to veracity and justice, to equity and charity, and the right of the case in whatever he is concerned, so far he is on the side of the Divine administration, and co-operates with it; and from hence, to such a man, arises naturally a secret satisfaction and sense of security, and implicit hope of somewhat further. And,

5 V. This hope is confirmed by the necessary tendencies of virtue, which, though not of present effect, yet are at present discernible in Nature, and so afford an instance of somewhat moral in the essential constitution of it. There is, in the nature of things, a tendency in virtue and vice to produce the good and bad effects now mentioned in a greater degree than they do in fact produce them. For instance, good and bad men would be much more rewarded and punished as such, were it not that justice is often artificially eluded, that characters are not known, and many who would thus favour virtue and discourage vice are hindered from doing so by accidental causes.[11] These tendencies of virtue and vice are obvious with regard to *individuals*. But it may require more particularly to be considered that power in a *society*, by being under the direction of virtue, naturally increases, and has a necessary tendency to prevail over opposite power not under the direction of it, in like manner as power, by being under the direction of reason, increases, and has a tendency to prevail over brute force. There are several brute creatures of equal, and several of superior strength to that of men; and possibly the sum of the whole strength of brutes may be greater than that of mankind; but reason gives us the advantage

[11] [The adverse phenomena with which Butler has to deal in this chapter are admirably explained. The indulgence of passion brings pleasure; but, says Butler, the pleasure is in the indulgence, not in the vice. Virtuous acts, again, are sometimes punished, not, however, it is replied, *because* virtuous, but *though* virtuous. The tendencies of virtue, it is objected, are checked by hindrances. It is so, but the checks are accidental and temporary, the tendencies essential and eternal. Perhaps the reasoning of this chapter approaches as near to positive demonstration as the nature of the argument will admit.]

and superiority over them, and thus man is the acknowledged governing animal upon the earth. Nor is this superiority considered by any as accidental; but as what reason has a tendency, in the nature of the thing, to obtain. And yet perhaps difficulties may be raised about the meaning, as well as the truth of the assertion, that virtue has the like tendency.

To obviate these difficulties, let us see more distinctly how the case stands with regard to reason, which is so readily acknowledged to have this advantageous tendency. Suppose then two or three men, of the best and most improved understanding, in a desolate open plain, attacked by ten times the number of beasts of prey: would their reason secure them the victory in this unequal combat? Power then, though joined with reason, and under its direction, cannot be expected to prevail over opposite power, though merely brutal, unless the one bears some proportion to the other. Again, put the imaginary case that rational and irrational creatures were of like external shape and manner: it is certain, before there were opportunities for the first to distinguish each other, to separate from their adversaries, and to form a union among themselves, they might be upon a level, or in several respects upon great disadvantage, though united they might be vastly superior; since union is of such efficacy, that ten men united might be able to accomplish what ten thousand of the same natural strength and understanding wholly ununited could not. In this case then, brute force might more than maintain its ground against reason, for want of union among the rational creatures. Or suppose a number of men to land upon an island inhabited only by wild beasts; a number of men who, by the regulations of civil government, the inventions of art, and the experience of some years, could they be preserved so long, would be really sufficient to subdue the wild beasts and to preserve themselves in security from them: yet a conjuncture of accidents might give such advantage to the irrational animals, as that they might at once overpower, and even extirpate the whole species of rational ones. Length of time then, proper scope and opportunities for reason to exert itself, may be absolutely necessary to its prevailing over brute force. Further still, there are

many instances of brutes succeeding in attempts which they could not have undertaken, had not their irrational nature rendered them incapable of foreseeing the danger of such attempts, or the fury of passion hindered their attending to it; and there are instances of reason and real prudence preventing men's undertaking what, it hath appeared afterwards, they might have succeeded in by a lucky rashness. And in certain conjunctures, ignorance and folly, weakness and discord, may have their advantages. So that rational animals have not necessarily the superiority over irrational ones; but, how improbable soever it may be, it is evidently possible that in some globes the latter may be superior. And were the former wholly at variance and disunited by false self-interest and envy, by treachery and injustice, and consequent rage and malice against each other, whilst the latter were firmly united among themselves by instinct, this might greatly contribute to the introducing such an inverted order of things. For every one would consider it as inverted, since reason has, in the nature of it, a tendency to prevail over brute force, notwithstanding the possibility it may not prevail, and the necessity which there is of many concurring circumstances to render it prevalent.

Now I say, virtue in a society has a like tendency to procure superiority and additional power, whether this power be considered as the means of security from opposite power, or of obtaining other advantages. And it has this tendency, by rendering public good an object and end to every member of the society, by putting every one upon consideration and diligence, recollection and self-government, both in order to see what is the most effectual method, and also in order to perform their proper part for obtaining and preserving it; by uniting a society within itself, and so increasing its strength; and, which is particularly to be mentioned, uniting it by means of veracity and justice. For as these last are principal bonds of union, so benevolence or public spirit, undirected, unrestrained by them, is nobody knows what.

And suppose the invisible world, and the invisible dispensations of Providence, to be, in any sort, analogous to what appears: or that both together make up one uniform scheme, the two parts of which, the part which we see and that

which is beyond our observation, are analogous to each other: then there must be a like natural tendency in the derived power, throughout the universe, under the direction of virtue, to prevail in general over that which is not under its direction, as there is in reason, derived reason in the universe, to prevail over brute force. But then, in order to the prevalence of virtue, or that it may actually produce what it has a tendency to produce, the like concurrences are necessary as are to the prevalence of reason. There must be some proportion between the natural power or force which is and that which is not under the direction of virtue: there must be sufficient length of time; for the complete success of virtue, as of reason, cannot, from the nature of the thing, be otherwise than gradual; there must be, as one may speak, a fair field of trial, a stage large and extensive enough, proper occasions and opportunities, for the virtuous to join together to exert themselves against lawless force, and to reap the fruit of their united labours. Now indeed it is to be hoped, that the disproportion between the good and bad, even here on earth, is not so great but that the former have natural power sufficient to their prevailing to a considerable degree, if circumstances would permit this power to be united. For much less, very much less, power under the direction of virtue would prevail over much greater not under the direction of it. However, good men over the face of the earth cannot unite; as for other reasons, so because they cannot be sufficiently ascertained of each other's characters. And the known course of human things, the scene we are now passing through, particularly the shortness of life, denies to virtue its full scope in several other respects. The natural tendency which we have been considering, though real, is *hindered* from being carried into effect in the present state; but these hindrances may be removed in a future one. Virtue, to borrow the Christian allusion, is militant here, and various untoward accidents contribute to its being often overborne: but it may combat with greater advantage hereafter, and prevail completely, and enjoy its consequent rewards in some future states. Neglected as it is, perhaps unknown, perhaps despised and oppressed here; there may be scenes in eternity lasting enough, and in every other way adapted to

afford it a sufficient sphere of action, and a sufficient sphere for the natural consequences of it to follow in fact. If the soul be naturally immortal, and this state be a progress towards a future one, as childhood is towards mature age, good men may naturally unite, not only amongst themselves, but also with other orders of virtuous creatures in that future state. For virtue, from the very nature of it, is a principle and bond of union, in some degree, amongst all who are endued with it, and known to each other; so as that by it a good man cannot but recommend himself to the favour and protection of all virtuous beings throughout the whole universe who can be acquainted with his character, and can any way interpose in his behalf in any part of his duration. And one might add, that suppose all this advantageous tendency of virtue to become effect, amongst one or more orders of creatures, in any distant scenes and periods, and to be seen by any orders of vicious creatures throughout the universal kingdom of God; this happy effect of virtue would have a tendency by way of example, and possibly in other ways, to amend those of them who are capable of amendment, and being recovered to a just sense of virtue. If our notions of the plan of Providence were enlarged in any sort proportionable to what late discoveries have enlarged our views with respect to the material world, representations of this kind would not appear absurd or extravagant. However, they are not to be taken as intended for a literal delineation of what is in fact the particular scheme of the universe, which cannot be known without revelation; for suppositions are not to be looked on as true because not incredible, but they are mentioned to show that our finding virtue to be hindered from procuring to itself such superiority and advantages is no objection against its having, in the essential nature of the thing, a tendency to procure them. And the suppositions now mentioned do plainly show this; for they show that these hindrances are so far from being necessary, that we ourselves can easily conceive how they may be removed in future states, and full scope be granted to virtue. And all these advantageous tendencies of it are to be considered as declarations of God in its favour. This however is taking a pretty large compass; though it is certain that, as the material world appears to be, in a man-

ner, boundless and immense, there must be *some* scheme of providence vast in proportion to it.

But let us return to the earth our habitation, and we shall 2
see this happy tendency of virtue, by imagining an instance not so vast and remote; by supposing a kingdom or society of men upon it, perfectly virtuous, for a succession of many ages, to which, if you please, may be given a situation advantageous for universal monarchy. In such a state there (a)
would be no such thing as faction; but men of the greatest capacity would, of course, all along have the chief direction of affairs willingly yielded to them, and they would share it among themselves without envy. Each of these would have the part assigned him, to which his genius was peculiarly adapted; and others, who had not any distinguished genius, would be safe, and think themselves very happy by being under the protection and guidance of those who had. Public determinations would really be the result of the united wisdom of the community; and they would faithfully be executed by the united strength of it. Some would, in a higher way contribute, but all would in some way contribute, to the public prosperity; and in it each would enjoy the fruits of his own virtue. And as injustice, whether by fraud or force, would be unknown among themselves, so they would be sufficiently secured from it in their neighbours. For cunning and false self-interest, confederacies in injustice, ever slight, and accompanied with faction and intestine treachery; these on one hand would be found mere childish folly and weakness, when set in opposition against wisdom, public spirit, union inviolable, and fidelity on the other; allowing both a sufficient length of years to try their force. Add the general influence which such a kingdom would have over the face of the earth, by way of example particularly, and the reverence which would be (b)
paid it. It would plainly be superior to all others, and the world must gradually come under its empire: not by means of lawless violence, but partly by what must be allowed to be just conquest, and partly by other kingdoms submitting themselves voluntarily to it, throughout a course of ages, and claiming its protection, one after another, in successive exigencies. The head of it would be an universal monarch, in another sense than any mortal has yet been; and the

eastern style would be literally applicable to him, that *all people, nations, and languages should serve him.* And though indeed our knowledge of human nature, and the whole history of mankind, show the impossibility, without some miraculous interposition, that a number of men, here on earth, should unite in one society or government in the fear of God and universal practice of virtue, and that such a government should continue so united for a succession of ages; yet admitting or supposing this, the effect would be as now drawn out. And thus, for instance, the wonderful power and prosperity promised to the Jewish nation in the Scripture would be, in a great measure, the consequence of what is predicted of them, that the *people should be all righteous, and inherit the land for ever*;[12] were we to understand the latter phrase of a long continuance only, sufficient to give things time to work. The predictions of this kind, for there are many of them, cannot come to pass in the present known course of Nature; but suppose them come to pass, and then the dominion and pre-eminence promised must naturally follow to a very considerable degree.

Consider now the general system of religion; that the government of the world is uniform, and one, and moral; that virtue and right shall finally have the advantage, and prevail over fraud and lawless force, over the deceits as well as the violence of wickedness, under the conduct of one supreme governor; and from the observations above made, it will appear that God has, by our reason, given us to see a peculiar connexion in the several parts of this scheme, and a tendency towards the completion of it, arising out of the very nature of virtue; which tendency is to be considered as somewhat moral in the essential constitution of things. If any one should think all this to be of little importance, I desire him to consider what he would think, if vice had essentially and in its nature these advantageous tendencies, or if virtue had essentially the direct contrary ones.

But it may be objected, that notwithstanding all these

[12] [Isa. lx. 21. The reasoning is not weakened if it be held that the words of this passage apply not to the Jews strictly, but to the Israel of God, the church of Christ.]

natural effects and these natural tendencies of virtue, yet things may be now going on throughout the universe, and may go on hereafter in the same mixed way as here at present upon earth: virtue sometimes prosperous, sometimes depressed; vice sometimes punished, sometimes successful.[18] The answer to which is, that it is not the purpose of this chapter, nor of this treatise, properly to prove God's perfect moral government over the world, or the truth of religion; but to observe what there is in the constitution and course of Nature, to confirm the proper proof of it, supposed to be known; and that the weight of the foregoing observations to this purpose may be thus distinctly proved. Pleasure and pain are, indeed, to a certain degree, say to a very high degree, distributed amongst us without any apparent regard to the merit or demerit of characters. And were there nothing else concerning this matter discernible in the constitution and course of Nature, there would be no ground from the constitution and course of Nature to hope or to fear that men would be rewarded or punished hereafter according to their deserts; which, however, it is to be remarked, implies that even then there would be no ground from appearances to think, that vice upon the whole would have the advantage, rather than that virtue would. And thus the proof of a future state of retribution would rest upon the usual known arguments for it, which are, I think, plainly unanswerable; and would be so, though there were no additional confirmation of them from the things above insisted on. But these things are a very strong confirmation of them. For,

First, They show that the Author of Nature is not indifferent to virtue and vice. They amount to a declaration from him, determinate and not to be evaded, in favour of one, and against the other; such a declaration, as there is nothing to be set over against or answer on the part of vice. So that were a man laying aside the proper proof of religion, to determine from the course of Nature only, whether it were most probable that the righteous or the wicked would have the advantage in a future life, there can be no doubt but that he would determine the probability to be

[18] [From Hume; though the objection is common enough.]

that the former would. The course of Nature then, in the view of it now given, furnishes us with a real practical proof of the obligations of religion.

2 Secondly, When, conformably to what religion teaches us, God shall reward and punish virtue and vice as such, so as that every one shall, upon the whole, have his deserts; this distributive justice will not be a thing different in *kind*, but only in *degree*, from what we experience in his present government. It will be that in *effect* towards which we now see a *tendency*. It will be no more than the *completion* of that moral government, the *principles and beginning* of which have been shown, beyond all dispute, discernible in the present constitution and course of Nature. And from hence it follows:

3 Thirdly, That, as under the natural government of God, our experience of those kinds and degrees of happiness and misery, which we do experience at present, gives just ground to hope for and to fear higher degrees and other kinds of both in a future state, supposing a future state admitted; so under his moral government our experience, that virtue and vice are, in the manners above mentioned, actually rewarded and punished at present, in a certain degree, gives just ground to hope and to fear that they *may be* rewarded and punished in a higher degree hereafter. It is acknowledged indeed that this alone is not sufficient ground to think that they *actually will be* rewarded and punished in a higher degree, rather than in a lower; but then,

4 Lastly, There is sufficient ground to think so, from the good and bad tendencies of virtue and vice. For these tendencies are essential, and founded in the nature of things; whereas the hindrances to their becoming effect are, in numberless cases, not necessary, but artificial only. Now it may be much more strongly argued that these tendencies, as well as the actual rewards and punishments of virtue and vice, which arise directly out of the nature of things, will remain hereafter, than that the accidental hindrances of them will. And if these hindrances do not remain, those rewards and punishments cannot but be carried on much farther towards the perfection of moral government; *i. e.* the tendencies of virtue and vice will become effect; but

when or where, or in what particular way, cannot be known at all but by revelation.

Upon the whole, there is a kind of moral government implied in God's natural government;[14] virtue and vice are naturally rewarded and punished as beneficial and mischievous to society,[15] and rewarded and punished directly as virtue and vice.[16] The notion then of a moral scheme of government is not fictitious but natural, for it is suggested to our thoughts by the constitution and course of Nature; and the execution of this scheme is actually begun, in the instances here mentioned. And these things are to be considered as a declaration of the Author of Nature for virtue and against vice; they give a credibility to the supposition of their being rewarded and punished hereafter, and also ground to hope and to fear that they may be rewarded and punished in higher degrees than they are here. And as all this is confirmed, so the argument for religion, from the constitution and course of Nature, is carried on farther, by observing that there are natural tendencies, and, in innumerable cases, only artificial hindrances to this moral scheme's being carried on much farther towards perfection than it is at present.[17] The notion then of a moral scheme of government, much more perfect than what is seen, is not a fictitious but a natural notion, for it is suggested to our thoughts by the essential tendencies of virtue and vice. And these tendencies are to be considered as intimations, as implicit promises and threatenings, from the Author of Nature, of much greater rewards and punishments to follow virtue and vice than do at present. And, indeed, every *natural* tendency which is to continue, but which is hindered from becoming effect by only *accidental* causes, affords a presumption that such tendency will, some time or other, become effect; a presumption in degree proportionable to the length of the duration, through which such tendency will continue. And from these things together arises a real presumption, that the moral scheme of government established in Nature, shall be carried on much farther towards perfection hereafter; and, I think, a presumption that it will be absolutely completed. But from these things, joined

[14] P. 56. [15] P. 57. [16] P. 58, etc. [17] P. 64, etc.

with the moral nature which God has given us, considered as given us by him, arises a practical proof[18] that it will be completed; a proof from fact; and therefore a distinct one from that which is deduced from the eternal and unalterable relations, the fitness and unfitness of actions.

CHAPTER IV.

OF A STATE OF PROBATION, AS IMPLYING TRIAL, DIFFICULTIES, AND DANGER.[1]

[Commonly probation has the same meaning as moral government. It is here used, however, to indicate the difficulties and risks consequent upon temptation. In this light it deserves special consideration.

A That *religious* probation implies danger and risk (trial) in regard to the future is not improbable, from the analogy of our *present natural* probation, which makes interest depend upon behaviour. The two are analogous in many particulars.

1 In *fact* our interests in both respects are in danger from ourselves, as is clear from the following:

a God has made our happiness to depend on our own acts, b, We blame ourselves for misconduct in temporal affairs. c, We actually miss happiness and incur misery through our own acts. d, The acknowledged hazards of the young, and the temptations to vices which are yet mischievous.

2 The occasions or causes of our natural and religious probations are analogous. These causes are in our nature or in our circumstances.

a Circumstances or temptations often betray men: so do their passions; the two mutually implying each other.

[18] See this proof drawn out briefly, ch. vi. [The views of chapter vi. form the basis of an admirable book by the late J. J. Gurney, on "Habit and Discipline."]

[1] ["One of the most successful chapters in the volume."—*Chalmers*. The difficulties and risks of a religious course, the aggravation of those risks by the acts of others, are all shown to correspond with what is experienced in common life, so that if we give up on these grounds the "God of religion," we must also give up the "God of Nature."]

b So close is the analogy, that in both cases the same passions are excited by the same means; so that we may describe both by similar terms.

3 The effects of these temptations on men's behaviour are analogous.

a Some gratify themselves without looking at the future.

b Some are *deceived* by passion.

c Some are *forced* away by it against their judgment.

d Some *shamelessly avow* their preference for vice in spite of consequences; and

e At the very least, men do voluntarily go wrong in both cases.

4 The way in which these difficulties and dangers are increased, and in some sense made, is alike in both cases.

a *Others* give us a bad education, set a bad example, encourage dishonest practices, corrupt religion, and diffuse false notions of happiness.

b *We ourselves* increase our difficulties, by negligence, by indulgence which weakens our moral powers; by accumulated irregularities, which make the course of virtue perplexed and disadvantageous.

B It is indeed objected that this state is improbable in two respects.

1 Our condition thus appears to be unfavourable to our interests. Answer:

a Still it is not to be complained of, for with care our difficulties may be met; and, as to God, it is equitable that he should put upon us what it is clear we can do, nor can we complain unless, etc.

b Our very condition in nature makes a similar condition in religion probable, from the analogy between the two.

2 This condition involves hazards, and may work ruin, and must be foreseen to work it: Such an arrangement is improbable.

No doubt, a, Such hazard is a mystery, which, however, the *whole* case may enable us to explain; b, At all events, the constitution of Nature is in favour of such hazard; and, c, As for the certainty of the ruin, it is as much contingent as our conduct is.

C The conclusion: in both capacities our interest is offered, not to our *acceptance*, but to our *acquisition*; *we are in danger* of missing it; and, without attention and self-denial, it *must be* missed.]

THE general doctrine of religion, that our present life is a state of probation for a future one, comprehends under is

several particular things distinct from each other. But the first and most common meaning of it seems to be, that future interest is now depending, and depending upon ourselves; that we have scope and opportunities here for that good and bad behaviour, which God will reward and punish hereafter; together with temptations to one, as well as inducements of reason to the other. And this is, in great measure, the same with saying, that we are under the moral government of God, and to give an account of our actions to him. For the notion of a future account and general righteous judgment implies some sort of temptations to what is wrong; otherwise there would be no moral possibility of doing wrong, nor ground for judgment or discrimination. But there is this difference, that the word *probation* is more distinctly and particularly expressive of allurements to wrong, or difficulties in adhering uniformly to what is right, and of the danger of miscarrying by such temptations, than the words *moral government.* A state of probation then, as thus particularly implying in it trial, difficulties and danger, may require to be considered distinctly by itsclf.

a And as the moral government of God, which religion teaches us, implies that we are in a state of trial with regard
1 to a future world; so also his natural government over us implies that we are in a state of trial, in the like sense, with regard to the present world. Natural government by rewards and punishments as much implies natural trial as moral government does moral trial. The natural government of God here meant[a] consists in his annexing pleasure to some actions and pain to others, which are in our power to do or forbear, and in giving us notice of such appoint-
2 ment beforehand. This necessarily implies that he has made our happiness and misery or our interest to depend in part upon ourselves: and so far as men have temptations to any course of action which will probably occasion them greater temporal inconvenience and ineasiness than satisfaction, so far their temporal interest is in danger from themselves, or they are in a state of trial with respect to it.
b Now people often blame others and even themselves for

[a] Chap. ii.

their misconduct in their temporal concerns; and we find many are greatly wanting to themselves, and miss of that natural happiness, which they might have obtained in the present life; perhaps every one does in some degree. But many run themselves into great inconvenience, and into extreme distress and misery; not through incapacity of knowing better, and doing better for themselves, which would be nothing to the present purpose, but through their own fault. And these things necessarily imply temptation and danger of miscarrying in a greater or less degree, with respect to our worldly interest or happiness. Every one too, without having religion in his thoughts, speaks of the hazards which young people run upon their setting out in the world; hazards from other causes than merely their ignorance, and unavoidable accidents. And some course of vice at least, being contrary to men's worldly interest or good; temptations to these must at the same time be temptations to forego our present and our future interest. Thus in our natural or temporal capacity, we are in a state of trial, *i. e.* of difficulty and danger, analogous, or like to our moral and religious trial.

This will more distinctly appear to any one who thinks it worth while, more distinctly to consider, what it is which constitutes our trial in both capacities, and to observe, how mankind behave under it.

And that which constitutes this our trial in both these 2
capacities, must be somewhat either in our external circumstances, or in our nature. For, on the one hand, persons may be betrayed into wrong behaviour upon surprise, or overcome upon any other very singular and extraordinary external occasions, who would otherwise have preserved their character of prudence and of virtue; in which cases every one in speaking of the wrong behaviour of these persons would impute it to such particular external circumstances. And on the other hand, men who have contracted habits of vice and folly of any kind, or have some particular passion in excess, will seek opportunities, and, as it were, go out of their way to gratify themselves in these respects, at the expense of their wisdom and their virtue; led to it, as every one would say, not by external temptations, but by such habits and passions. And the account of this last

case is, that particular passions are no more coincident with prudence or that reasonable self-love, the end of which is our worldly interest, than we are with the principle of virtue and religion; but often draw contrary ways to one as well as to the other; and so such particular passions are as much temptations to act imprudently with regard to our worldly interest, as to act viciously.[a] However, as when we say, men are misled by external circumstances of temptation, it cannot but be understood that there is somewhat within themselves to render those circumstances temptations, or to render them susceptible of impressions from them; so when we say they are misled by passions, it is always supposed that there are occasions, circumstances, and objects, exciting these passions, and affording means for gratifying them. And therefore, temptations from within and from without, coincide and mutually imply each other. Now the several external objects of the appetites, passions, and affections, being present to the senses, or offering themselves to the mind, and so exciting emotions suitable to their nature; not only in cases where they can be gratified consistently with innocence and prudence, but also in cases where they cannot, and yet can be gratified imprudently and viciously; this as really puts them in danger of voluntarily foregoing their present interest or good, as their future; and as really renders self-denial necessary to secure one as the other; *i. e.* we are in a like state of trial with respect to both, by the very same passions,
5 excited by the very same means. Thus mankind having a temporal interest depending upon themselves, and a prudent course of behaviour being necessary to secure it; passions inordinately excited, whether by means of example or by any other external circumstance, towards such objects, at such times or in such degrees, as that they cannot be gratified consistently with worldly prudence; are temptations, dangerous and too often successful temptations, to forego a greater temporal good for a less; *i. e.* to forego what is, upon the whole, our temporal interest, for the sake of a present gratification. This is a description of our state of trial in our temporal capacity. Substitute now the word

[a] See Sermons preached at the Rolls, 1726, second edition, p. 205, etc., preface, p. 25, etc., Sermon, p. 21.

future for *temporal*, and *virtue* for *prudence*; and it will be just as proper a description of our state of trial in our religious capacity; so analogous they are to each other.

If from consideration of this our like state of trial in both a
capacities, we go on to observe further, how mankind behave under it; we shall find there are some who have so little sense of it that they scarce look beyond the passing day; they are so taken up with present gratifications as to a
have, in a manner, no feeling of consequences, no regard to their future ease or fortune in this life, any more than to their happiness in another. Some appear to be blinded and b
deceived by inordinate passion in their worldly concerns as much as in religion. Others are not deceived, but, as it were, forcibly carried away by the like passions, against their better judgment and feeble resolutions too of acting c
better. And there are men, and truly they are not a few, who shamelessly avow, not their interest, but their mere will and pleasure, to be their law of life; and who, in open d
defiance of everything that is reasonable, will go on in a course of vicious extravagance, foreseeing, with no remorse and little fear, that it will be their temporal ruin; and some of them under the apprehension of the consequences of wickedness in another state. And to speak in the most moderate way, human creatures are not only continually e
liable to go wrong voluntarily, but we see likewise that they often actually do so, with respect to their temporal interests as well as with respect to religion.

Thus our difficulties and dangers, or our trials, in our (2)
temporal and our religious capacity, as they proceed from the same causes, and have the same effect upon men's (3)
behaviour, are evidently analogous, and of the same kind.

It may be added, that as the difficulties and dangers of 4
miscarrying in our religious state of trial, are greatly increased, and one is ready to think, in a manner wholly *made* by the ill behaviour of others; by a wrong education, wrong a
in a moral sense, sometimes positively vicious; by general bad example, by the dishonest artifices which are got into business of all kinds; and in very many parts of the world, by religion's being corrupted into superstitions, which indulge men in their vices; so in like manner, the difficulties of conducting ourselves prudently in respect to our present

interest, and our danger of being led aside from pursuing it,
are greatly increased by a foolish education; and after we
come to mature age, by the extravagance and carelessness
of others, whom we have intercourse with, and by mistaken
notions, very generally prevalent, and taken up from
common opinion, concerning temporal happiness, and
b wherein it consists. And persons by their own negligence
and folly in their temporal affairs, no less than by a course
of vice, bring themselves into new difficulties; and by habits
of indulgence, become less qualified to go through them;
and one irregularity after another, embarrasses things to
such a degree, that they know not whereabout they are,
and often makes the path of conduct so intricate and per-
plexed, that it is difficult to trace it out, difficult even to
determine what is the prudent or the moral part. Thus,
for instance, wrong behaviour in one stage of life, youth;
wrong, I mean, considering ourselves only in our temporal
capacity, without taking in religion; this in several ways
increases the difficulties of right behaviour in mature age,
i. e. puts us into a more disadvantageous state of trial in our
R temporal capacity.

Obj. We are an inferior part of the creation of God. There
are natural appearances of our being in a state of degrada-
tion.[4] And we certainly are in a condition, which *does not*
1 *seem* by any means the most advantageous we could imagine
or desire, either in our natural or moral capacity, for secur-
ing either our present or future interest. However, this
condition low and careful and uncertain as it is, does not
2 afford any just ground of complaint. For, as men may
manage their temporal affairs with prudence, and so pass
their days here on earth in tolerable ease and satisfaction,
by a moderate degree of care; so likewise with regard to
religion, there is no more required than what they are well
able to do,[5] and what they must be greatly wanting to them-

[4] Part ii. chap. v.

[5] On the sentiment here expressed see note ([11]) to chap. v.

[An objection is sometimes taken to the reasonings of this chapter and of the volume—to the effect, that religion and its interests are so much more important than those of common life that we cannot compare them or apply God's dealings in the one case to explain his dealings in the other. . . . Butler has answered this objection

selves if they neglect. And for persons to have that put upon them which they are well able to go through, and no more, we naturally consider as an equitable thing, supposing it done by proper authority. Nor have we any more reason to complain of it with regard to the Author of Nature, than of his not having given us other advantages, belonging to other orders of creatures.

But the thing here insisted upon is that the state of trial which religion teaches us we are in, is rendered credible by its being throughout uniform and of a piece with the general conduct of Providence towards us, in all other respects within the compass of our knowledge. Indeed if mankind, considered in their natural capacity, as inhabitants of this world only, found themselves, from their birth to their death, in a settled state of security and happiness, without any solicitude or thought of their *own*; or if they were in no danger of being brought into inconveniences and distress, by carelessness or the folly of passion, through bad example, the treachery of others, or the deceitful appearances of things; were this our natural condition, then it might seem strange, and be some presumption against the truth of religion, that it represents our future and more general interest, as not secure of course, but as depending upon our behaviour, and requiring recollection and self-government to obtain it. For it might be alleged, "What you say is our condition in one respect, is not in any wise of a sort with what we find, by experience, our condition is in another. Our whole present interest is secured to our hands without any solicitude of ours; and

in different passages (see chap. v. B 2). There is, however, an answer of another kind. If the objection is to the *likelihood* of such arrangements in religion, then the frequency of similar arrangements in common life, even where important interests are at stake, is a fair reply. If the objection is to the *justice* of such arrangements, then the existence of similar arrangements in common life is a *decisive* reply. If it is said to be *unjust* to offer eternal life to our acquisition rather than to our acceptance, and then to make the acquisition a matter of self-denial and difficulty, it is also *unjust* to make the commonest blessings similarly dependent upon ourselves. If there is no injustice in the one arrangement, where the interests are temporal, neither is there in the other, though the interests are eternal.]

why should not our future interest, if we have any such, be
so too?" But since, on the contrary, thought and con-
sideration, the voluntary denying ourselves many things
which we desire, and a course of behaviour, far from being
always agreeable to us, are absolutely necessary to our
acting even a common decent and a common prudent part,
so as to pass with any satisfaction through the present
world, and be received upon any tolerable good terms in it;
since this is the case, all presumption against self-denial
and attention being necessary to secure our higher interest,
2 is removed. Had we not experience, it might, perhaps
speciously, be urged that it is impossible anything of hazard
and danger should be put upon us by an Infinite Being;
when everything which is hazard and danger in our
manner of conception, and will end in error, confusion, and
misery, is now already certain in his foreknowledge. And
a indeed, why anything of hazard and danger should be put
upon such frail creatures as we are, may well be thought a
difficulty in speculation; and cannot but be so, till we
b know the whole, or, however, much more of the case. But
still the constitution of Nature is as it is. Our happiness
and misery are trusted to our conduct, and made to depend
upon it. Somewhat, and in many circumstances a great
deal too, is put upon us either to do or to suffer as we
choose. And all the various miseries of life, which people
bring upon themselves by negligence and folly, and might
have avoided by proper care, are instances of this; which
c miseries are beforehand just as contingent and undetermined
as their conduct, and left to be determined by it.

C These observations are an answer to the objections against the credibility of a state of trial, as implying temptations, and real danger of miscarrying with regard to our general interest, under the moral government of God; and they show, that if we are at all to be considered in such a capacity, and as having such an interest; the general analogy of Providence must lead us to apprehend ourselves in danger of miscarrying, in different degrees, as to this interest, by our neglecting to act the proper part belonging to us in that capacity. For we have a present interest, under the government of God, which we experience here upon earth. And this interest, as it is not forced upon us, so neither is it

offered to our acceptance, but to our acquisition; in such sort, as that we are in danger of missing it, by means of temptations to neglect, or act contrary to it; and without attention and self-denial, must and do miss of it. It is then perfectly credible that this may be our case, with respect to that chief and final good which religion proposes to us.

CHAPTER V.

ON A STATE OF PROBATION, AS INTENDED FOR MORAL DISCIPLINE AND IMPROVEMENT.

[INTRODUCTION.—Why should there be the risk indicated in the last chapter? is a question attended with insuperable difficulties. a, All vice, indeed, and many miseries, have some good effects; yet the reason for the existence of vice and misery we cannot give, and perhaps, b, it is beyond our faculties to understand it, or it may be better for us not to know it. Yet, c, the existence of these conduces to our fitness for another life. Though this be a *partial* reason only, it shows at least what our present business is—improvement in holiness.

A The present trial, preparing us for a future life, is analogous to the education men now undergo in one state of life preparing them for another. This analogy will appear from some considerations common to both probations (1, 2); and from a distinct consideration of each, the natural (3) and the religious (4).

1 All creatures have capacities, etc., for a particular way of life. Happiness depends now upon the agreement between their capacities and their condition. So it must be in the future.

2 The constitution of creatures is such that they may become qualified for states of life for which they were once unqualified, in which observe,

a Men experience increased facility of action, a settled alteration of character, an improvement by exercise of their intellectual faculties. The first two are habit, as perhaps is the third.

b Habits are, according to *their* nature, either *perceptive* or passive and *active*; or, according to man's nature, *bodily* and *mental*; which last are either intellectual or moral.

1 Our habits are formed by repeated acts, which acts, in the case of moral habits, are either the carrying out of prac-

tical principles, and resolutions, or attempts to induce others to act.

2 Passive impressions, it must be noticed, are weakened by repetition, and will not of themselves form habits.

3 From the two previous remarks it follows that, with repetition, the motives and excitements to act become feebler, as passive impressions, but stronger, as active principles. Three examples, (a), (b), (c).

4 Hence habits are not strengthened by admonitions or passive impressions, but by appropriate action.

5 Of much connected with them we may be ignorant, and whether they can be formed in any other way, etc. The facts, however, are clear, and are such as the foregoing.

6 With repeated acts, the facility and the pleasure increase, etc., till a new character is gained.

3 Looking more closely at our *present natural* probation only (one state of life preparing us for another), we note,

a Men start in life unfurnished; *needing* acquired qualifications of knowledge and experience to fit them for after life.

1 If man were born with matured faculties, yet without training, he would be distracted how to use them; and, probably, 2, So self-willed as to be unfit to learn.

b This need Nature supplies, by placing us in the outset in a condition *for acquiring* the necessary discipline and improvement.

1 Children learn gradually the objects and facts around them; are placed under domestic government, where they are taught self-control and obedience, and afterwards by experience they acquire caution and acquaintance with rules of conduct innumerable. 2, This learning, however, depends much upon themselves; though part is communicated by others. 3, Upon their behaviour and use of this discipline their character and station depend.

c To all this our religious probation is analogous, so that

Even if the manner of that religious probation is not quite discernible, this is no objection. For we see not the manner of our present probation, though we see its results (sleep, food, restraint).

4 Looking more closely at our *present religious probation* only (the present life preparing us for another), note,

a That future life will apparently be moral, social, with scope for virtue, and requiring it, though there is much not revealed.

b Our capability of moral improvement in preparing for that state has already been proved (see above, 2, b, 1–6).

c Our need of moral improvement will appear from the following considerations.

1 In fact, mankind are wicked, and at best imperfect.

2 From our nature, as finite beings, we are in danger of deviating from right (a) through particular affections, which fix on external objects, are excited by them independently of the moral principle, and our only security is (b) from the moral principle strengthened into habit, as Butler describes. To apply this to a future life supposes that particular affections will exist there. If they do, then this discipline will be required. If they do not, still the discipline will secure increased happiness, if the government of the universe is moral.

3 The conclusion, and a fresh proof is, that a nature originally upright may, through these laws, fail or be improved in virtue.

(a) An upright nature may fail; not through liberty, which can account for nothing, but through particular affections in themselves sinless, the operation of which Butler describes in five particulars.

(b) Or be improved to higher and securer virtue, by following the moral principle, which would be strengthened as the particular affections would be weakened, till at last security would be perfect; though a fall would always be possible, because the affections and the moral principle would never be absolutely coincident.

(c) Hence creatures made perfect may need discipline as a security against falling, and a state fit for discipline may be requisite even for them.

4 If an upright nature needs improvement, much more does one that is fallen.

d The present state is peculiarly fit for such discipline, for

1 It teaches moderation and self-restraint.

2 Shows peculiarly our liability to vice: a different thing from speculative knowledge.

3 It puts us on our guard, exercises self-denial, the moral principle, and forms virtuous habits. Self-denial, indeed, is not necessary to virtue, but it conduces to form *habits* of virtue.

B *Objections*

1 It may be said, this state of discipline overtaxes our powers, and supposes a degree of improvement greater than we are capable of.

2 It is said that, in fact, this life is rather a discipline in vice than in virtue. Answer: a, It is not intended to give all the reasons why men are placed here, but some only. b, And, in fact, this life is a discipline in virtue to all who are willing to make it so. c, The fact that such discipline is wasted with some is only analogous to other facts of waste; of seeds, for example, which yet God created to become fruitful. The things here compared are, indeed, different in value, but the facts are equally unaccountable.

3 It is said, against the whole of this discipline, that it makes moral conduct proceed from fear and self-love, and so is not properly moral discipline at all. To which answer,

a To do God's commands because he gives them is obedience, even though it proceed from fear or hope; and repeated acts of obedience will form the moral habit.

b This distinction between self-love and regard to God's authority may be too finely drawn. Both are coincident, and may coexist as just principles of action. He, moreover, who begins to act from the first, will come ultimately to act morally in the highest sense.

4 The discipline here spoken of includes passive resignation, and this can have no place in heaven, because there are no afflictions. Answer,

a Prosperity may beget discontent, as well as affliction.

b And, though resignation is not needed in heaven, the habit may be, for, without such habits, self-love and particular affections may be excited beyond their proper limits. And,

c Submission to God's sovereignty, which is not usurped and precarious, but just and eternal, requires in heaven the same temper as resignation upon earth.

5 But might not all the difficulty and risks of this discipline, have been prevented, if men had been made at once what they were to be? To which answer,

a The law of life is not to save us trouble, but to impose it, and enable us to go through it. What we become seems ever dependent upon what we do.

b Improvement by habit supplies natural deficiency, and creates natural security, as acquirement in natural things meets our bodily needs.

c And everywhere we are to choose improvement at the price of effort, or misery as the result of neglect.

C Probation not only implies risks (ch. iv.) and aids improvement (ch. v.), but it seems also intended for a *third* purpose—manifestation of character.

1 This manifestation may refer only to this life; but it may refer also to the next: God intending to show what men are, in order to make it clearer on what principles he deals with them.

2 Certainly in this life such manifestation is a means of present moral government, and seems essential to it; always improving men, if they act well.]

FROM the consideration of our being in a probation-state, INTRO
of so much difficulty and hazard, naturally arises the question, how we came to be placed in it? But such a general inquiry as this would be found involved in insuperable difficulties. For though some of these difficulties would be lessened by observing, that all wickedness is voluntary, as is implied in its very notion, and that many of the miseries of life have apparent good effects; yet, when we consider other circumstances belonging to both, and what must be the consequence of the former in a life to come; it cannot
but be acknowledged plain folly and presumption to pretend a
to give an account of the whole reasons of this matter; the whole reasons of our being allotted a condition, out of which so much wickedness and misery, so circumstanced, would in fact arise. Whether it be not beyond our faculties
not only to find out, but even to understand the whole ac- b
count of this; or, though we should be supposed capable of understanding it, yet whether it would be of service or prejudice to us to be informed of it, is impossible to say.[1] But

[1] [The wisdom of these remarks is obvious; but it appears more apparent if contrasted with the speculations prevalent in Butler's age. Bayle had recently revived the ancient objections to all religion, which the very existence of evil was supposed to justify: and had thence denied the Divine existence or perfections (Dict. Manichæan; Paulician; Zoroaster; Marcionite). Leibnitz was now reviving a form of the old Stoic doctrine, teaching that the present world is the best possible, and that evil itself is either a form of good or essential to it. Dr. King, archbishop of Dublin, had taught more cautiously that evil must be consistent with God's character, for it

as our present condition can in no wise be shown inconsistent with the perfect moral government of God; so religion teaches us we were placed in it, that we might qualify our-
c selves by the practice of virtue, for another state which is to follow it. And this, though but a partial answer, a very partial one indeed, to the inquiry now mentioned; yet is a more satisfactory answer to another which is of real and of the utmost importance to us to have answered; the inquiry, What is our business here? The known end then, why we are placed in a state of so much affliction, hazard, and difficulty, is our improvement in virtue and piety, as the requisite qualification for a future state of security and happiness.

Now the beginning of life, considered as an education for mature age in the present world, appears plainly, at first
A sight, analogous to this our trial for a future one: the former being in our temporal capacity, what the latter is in our religious capacity. But some observations common to both of them, and a more distinct consideration of each, will more distinctly show the extent and force of the analogy between them; and the credibility, which arises from hence, as well as from the nature of the thing, that the present life was intended to be a state of discipline for a future one.

1 I. Every species of creatures is, we see, designed for a particular way of life; to which, the nature, the capacities, temper, and qualifications of each species, are as necessary as their external circumstances. Both come into the notion of such state, or particular way of life, and are constituent parts of it. Change a man's capacities or character to the degree in which it is conceivable they may be changed, and

exists, and that probably it is a necessary effect of free agency. A little later Warburton and Jenyns, Crousaz and Johnson, joined in the discussion, though without throwing much light upon it. Butler agreed herein with Dr. Samuel Clarke (see "XVIII Sermons preached on several Occasions," Serm. xiii.), and sums up his view in the above paragraph: Evil is voluntary, and is overruled for good, yet is its existence a mystery we cannot fathom. Scripture neither introduces it (as Butler elsewhere notes), nor clears it up (as Whately has shown, see King's Sermon on Predestination, App. 2), but leaves it for the disclosures of another day.]

he would be altogether incapable of a human course of life, and human happiness; as incapable as if, his nature continuing unchanged, he were placed in a world where he had no sphere of action, nor any objects to answer his appetites, passions, and affections of any sort. One thing is set over against another, as an ancient writer expresses it.[a] Our nature corresponds to our external condition. Without this correspondence, there would be no possibility of any such thing as human life and human happiness; which life and happiness are, therefore, a *result* from our nature and condition jointly; meaning by human life, not living in the literal sense, but the whole complex notion commonly understood by those words. So that without determining what will be the employment and happiness, the particular life of good men hereafter, there must be some determinate capacities, some necessary character and qualifications, without which persons cannot but be utterly incapable of it: in like manner, as there must be some, without which men would be incapable of their present state of life. Now,

2 II. The constitution of human creatures, indeed all creatures which come under our notice, is such as that they are capable of naturally becoming qualified for states of life, for which they were once wholly unqualified. In imagination we may indeed conceive of creatures, as incapable of having any of their faculties naturally enlarged, or as being unable naturally to acquire any new qualifications: but the faculties of every species known to us are made for enlargement; for acquirements of experience and habits. We find ourselves in particular endued with capacities, not only of perceiving ideas, and of knowledge or perceiving truth, but also of storing up our ideas and knowledge by memory. We are capable, not only of acting, and of having different momentary impressions made upon us, but of getting a new facility in any kind of action, and of settled alterations in our temper or character. The power of the last two is the power of habits. But neither the perception of ideas, nor knowledge of any sort are habits, though absolutely necessary to the forming of them. However, apprehension, reason, memory, which are the capacities of acquired know-

[a] [Ecclus. xlii. 24, 25.]

ledge, are greatly improved by exercise. Whether the word *habit* is applicable to all these improvements, and in particular how far the powers of memory and of habits may be powers of the same nature, I shall not inquire.[3] But that perceptions come into our minds readily and of course, by means of their having been there before, seems a thing of the same sort, as readiness in any particular kind of action, proceeding from being accustomed to it. And aptness to recollect practical observations of service in our conduct, is plainly habit in many cases. There are habits of perception, and habits of action. An instance of the former is our constant and even involuntary readiness in correcting the impressions of our sight, concerning magnitudes and distances, so as to substitute judgment in the room of sensation imperceptibly to ourselves. And it seems as if all other associations of ideas not naturally connected might be called *passive habits;* as properly as our readiness in understanding languages upon sight, or hearing of words. And our readiness in speaking and writing them is an instance of the latter, of active habits. For distinctness we may consider habits as belonging to the body or the mind, and the latter will be explained by the former. Under the former are comprehended all bodily activities or motions, whether graceful or unbecoming, which are owing to use; under the latter, general habits of life and conduct, such as those of obedience and submission to authority, or to any particular person; those of veracity, justice, and charity; those of attention, industry, self-government, envy, revenge. And habits of this latter kind seem produced by repeated acts, as well as the former. And in like manner as habits be-

[3] [*How* it is that actions become easier in consequence of being repeated is a metaphysical question on which authorities are not agreed. Malebranche thinks that the motions of the animal spirits afford the true solution, and even Locke uses language that seems to approve of this view. Hartley and Brown resolve all habits into association; Dr. Reid thinks that the explanation is indiscoverable (Works, p. 551); and Sir W. Hamilton so far concurs as to class habits with acts of the mind which, manifesting their reality in their effects, are themselves out of consciousness. Dr. Chalmers concurs with Brown, modifying, however, parts of his system. Butler wisely keeps to a statement of the facts, which all admit.]

longing to the body are produced by external acts, so habits of the mind are produced by the exertion of inward practical principles, *i. e.*, by carrying them into act, or acting upon them; the principles of obedience, or veracity, justice, and charity. Nor can those habits be formed by any external course of action, otherwise than as it proceeds from these principles; because it is only these inward principles exerted, which are strictly acts of obedience, of veracity, of justice, and of charity. So likewise habits of attention, industry, self-government, are in the same manner acquired by exercise; and habits of envy and revenge by indulgence, whether in outward act, or in thought and intention, *i. e.*, inward act; for such intention is an act. Resolutions also to do well are properly acts. And endeavouring to enforce upon our minds a practical sense of virtue, or to beget in others that practical sense of it which a man really has himself, is a virtuous act. All these, therefore, may and will contribute towards forming good habits. But going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures of it; this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible, *i. e.*, form a habit of insensibility, to all moral considerations. For, from our very faculty of habits, passive impressions, by being repeated, grow weaker. Thoughts, by often passing through the mind, are felt less sensibly; being accustomed to danger begets intrepidity, *i. e.*, lessens fear; to distress, lessens the passion of pity; to instances of others' mortality, lessens the sensible apprehension of our own. And from these two observations together, that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us;[4] it must follow that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, whilst these

[4] [These views on passive impressions have been adopted and enforced by Dugald Stewart, who avows that he has taken them from Butler. Elements, p. 525. See also Chalmers' Br. Treat., p. 104.]

motives and excitements themselves are, by proportionable degrees, growing less sensible, *i. e.*, are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen. And experience confirms this; for active principles, at the very time that they are less lively in perception than they were, are found to be somehow wrought more thoroughly into the temper and character, and become more effectual in influencing our practice. The three things just mentioned
(a) may afford instances of it. Perception of danger is a natural excitement of passive fear and active caution, and by being inured to danger, habits of the latter are gradually wrought at the same time that the former gradually lessens. Perception of distress in others is a natural excitement, passively to pity, and actively to relieve it; but let a man set himself to attend to, inquire out, and relieve distressed
(b) persons, and he cannot but grow less and less sensibly affected with the various miseries of life with which he must become acquainted; when yet, at the same time, benevolence, considered not as a passion, but as a practical principle of action, will strengthen; and whilst he passively compassionates the distressed less, he will acquire a greater
(c) aptitude actively to assist and befriend them. So also at the same time that the daily instances of men's dying around us give us daily a less sensible passive feeling or apprehension of our own mortality, such instances greatly contribute to the strengthening a practical regard to it in serious men; *i. e.*, to forming a habit of acting with a constant view to it. And this seems again further to show that passive impressions made upon our minds by admonition, experience, example, though they may have a remote efficacy, and a very great one, towards forming active habits, yet, can have
4 this efficacy no otherwise than by inducing us to such a course of action; and that it is not being affected so and so, but acting, which forms those habits; only it must be always remembered, that real endeavours to enforce good impressions upon ourselves are a species of virtuous action.
5 Nor do we know how far it is possible in the nature of things, that effects should be wrought in us at once, equivalent to habits, *i. e.*, what is wrought by use and exercise. However, the thing insisted upon is, not what may be possible, but what is in fact the appointment of Nature; which

is, that active habits are to be formed by exercise. Their progress may be so gradual as to be imperceptible in its steps; it may be hard to explain the faculty, by which we are capable of habits, throughout its several parts, and to trace it up to its original, so as to distinguish it from all others in our mind, and it seems as if contrary effects were to be ascribed to it.[5] But the thing in general that our nature is formed to yield, in some such manner as this, to use and exercise, is matter of certain experience.

Thus, by accustoming ourselves to any course of action, 4 we get an aptness to go on, a facility, readiness, and often pleasure, in it. The inclinations which rendered us averse to it grow weaker; the difficulties in it, not only the imaginary but the real ones, lessen; the reasons for it offer themselves of course to our thoughts upon all occasions; and the least glimpse of them is sufficient to make us go on in a course of action to which we have been accustomed. And practical principles appear to grow stronger, absolutely in themselves, by exercise, as well as relatively with regard to contrary principles, which, by being accustomed to submit, do so habitually and of course. And thus a new character, in several respects, may be formed; and many habitudes of life, not given by Nature, but which Nature directs us to acquire.

III. Indeed we may be assured, that we should never have 3 had these capacities of improving by experience, acquired knowledge, and habits, had they not been necessary and intended to be made use of. And accordingly we find them so necessary, and so much intended, that without them we

[5] [There are many facts which justify this suggestion. A blind man improves in the power of touch, through habit, till his nicety is scarcely credible. Perhaps, however, it is not the sensibility which improves, but the judgment. The man who stifles compassion feels less than the man who exercises it. Avarice, as an emotion, seems *strengthened* by hoarding, as are envy and malice by indulgence. The active principle of benevolence, again, becomes almost mechanical, after repeated sights of suffering and appropriate acts of kindness. Facts, or seeming facts of this kind, have induced some to hold "that some passions are increased by habit, others decreased, and others again increased to a certain point, then decreased."—Smith's Sketches of Moral Philosophy, p. 401.]

should be utterly incapable of that, which was the end for which we were made, considered in our temporal capacity only: the employments and satisfactions of our mature state of life.

Nature does in no wise qualify us wholly, much less at once, for this mature state of life. Even maturity of understanding and bodily strength, are not only arrived to gradually, but are also very much owing to the continued exercise of our powers of body and mind from infancy. But if we suppose a person brought into the world with both these in maturity, as far as this is conceivable, he would plainly at first be as unqualified for the human life of mature age as an idiot. He would be in a manner distracted with astonishment, and apprehension, and curiosity, and suspense; nor can one guess how long it would be, before he would be familiarized to himself and to the objects about him, enough even to set himself to anything. It may be questioned too, whether the natural information of his sight and hearing would be of any manner of use at all to him in acting, before experience.[6] And it seems that men would be strangely headstrong and self-willed, and disposed to exert themselves with an impetuosity, which would render society insupportable and the living in it impracticable, were it not for some acquired moderation and self-government, some aptitude and readiness in restraining themselves, and concealing their sense of things. Want of everything of this kind which is learned, would render a man as incapable of society as want of language would; or as his natural ignorance of any of the particular employments of life would render him incapable of providing himself with the common conveniences, or supplying the necessary wants of it. In these respects, and probably in many more of which we have no particular notion, mankind is left by Nature an unformed, unfinished creature, utterly deficient and unqualified, before the ac-

[6] [Berkeley has shown in his Theory of Vision that the impressions of sight have to be corrected by touch, or other senses, before men can act upon them. This conclusion, which he reached by reasoning, was verified in the case of a young man touched by Mr. Cheselden, Phil. Trans., anno 1728. Though, it must be added, more has been founded on that case than it will easily bear.]

quirement of knowledge, experience, and habits, for that mature state of life, which was the end of his creation, considering him as related only to this world.[7]

But then, as Nature has endued us with a power of supplying those deficiencies, by acquired knowledge, experience, and habits; so likewise we are placed in a condition, in infancy, childhood, and youth, fitted for it; fitted for our acquiring those qualifications of all sorts, which we stand in need of in mature age. Hence children from their very birth are daily growing acquainted with the objects about them, with the scene in which they are placed, and to have a future part, and learning somewhat or other necessary to the performance of it. The subordinations to which they are accustomed in domestic life, teach them self-government in common behaviour abroad, and prepare them for subjection and obedience to civil authority. What passes before their eyes and daily happens to them, gives them experience, caution against treachery and deceit, together with numberless little rules of action and conduct which we could not live without, and which are learned so insensibly and so perfectly, as to be mistaken perhaps for instinct, though they are the effect of long experience and exercise, as much so as language or knowledge in particular business, or the qualifications and behaviour belonging to the several ranks and professions. Thus the beginning of our days is adapted to be, and is, a state of education in the theory and practice of mature life. We are much assisted in it by example, instruction, and the care of others, but a great deal is left to ourselves to do. And of this, as part is done easily and of course, so part requires diligence and care, the voluntary foregoing many things which we desire, and setting ourselves to what we should have no inclination to, but for the necessity or expedience of it. For that labour and industry, which the station of so many absolutely requires, they would be greatly unqualified for in maturity, as those in other stations would be for any other sorts of application, if both were not accustomed to them in their youth. And according as persons behave themselves in the general education which all go through, and in the particular ones

7 [See, in confirmation of this view, Whately's Pol. Ec., p. 112, and Lecture on Civilization.]

3 adapted to particular employments, their character is formed and made appear; they recommend themselves more or less, and are capable of, and placed in, different stations in the society of mankind.

c The former part of life then is to be considered as an important opportunity, which Nature puts into our hands, and which, when lost, is not to be recovered. And our being placed in a state of discipline, throughout this life, for another world, is a providential disposition of things, exactly of the same kind, as our being placed in a state of discipline during childhood for mature age. Our condition in both respects is uniform and of a piece, and comprehended under one and the same general law of Nature.

And if we were not able at all to discern how or in what way the present life could be our preparation for another: this would be no objection against the credibility of its being so. For we do not discern how food and sleep contribute to the growth of the body, nor could have any thought that they would before we had experience. Nor do children at all think on the one hand, that the sports and exercises to which they are so much addicted, contribute to their health and growth; nor, on the other, of the necessity which there is for their being restrained in them; nor are they capable of understanding the use of many parts of discipline, which, nevertheless, they must be made to go through, in order to qualify them for the business of mature age. Were we not able then to discover in what respects the present life could form us for a future one; yet nothing would be more supposable than that it might, in some respects or other, from the general analogy of Providence. And this, for aught I see, might reasonably be said even though we should not take in the consideration of God's moral government over the world. But,

4 IV. Take in this consideration, and consequently, that the character of virtue and piety is a necessary qualification for the future state; and then we may distinctly see, how, and in what respects, the present life may be a preparation for it: since we *want, and are capable of, improvement in that character, by moral and religious habits*; and *the present life is fit to be a state of discipline for such improvement*; in like manner as we have already observed, how, and in what respects infancy

childhood, and youth, are a necessary preparation, and a natural state of discipline for mature age.

Nothing which we at present see would lead us to the thought of a solitary inactive state hereafter: but, if we judge at all from the analogy of Nature, we must suppose, according to the Scripture account of it, that it will be a community. And there is no shadow of anything unreasonable in conceiving, though there be no analogy for it, that this community will be, as the Scripture represents it, under the more immediate, or, if such an expression may be used, the more sensible government of God. Nor is our ignorance, what will be the employments of this happy community, nor our consequent ignorance, what particular scope or occasion there will be for the exercise of veracity, justice, and charity, amongst the members of it with regard to each other, any proof, that there will be no sphere of exercise for those virtues. Much less, if that were possible, is our ignorance any proof, that there will be no occasion for that frame of mind, or character, which is formed by the daily practice of those particular virtues here, and which is a result from it. This at least must be owned in general, that, as the government established in the universe is moral, the character of virtue and piety must, in some way or other, be the condition of a
our happiness, or the qualification for it.

Now from what is above observed, concerning our natural b
power of habits, it is easy to see, that we are *capable* of moral improvement by discipline. And how greatly we *want* it, c
need not be proved to any one who is acquainted with the great wickedness of mankind; or even with those imperfec- 1
tions, which the best are conscious of. But it is not perhaps distinctly attended to by every one, that the occasion which human creatures have for discipline, to improve in them this character of virtue and piety, is to be traced up higher than to excess in the passions, by indulgence and habits of vice. 2
Mankind, and perhaps all finite creatures, from the very constitution of their nature, before habits of virtue, are deficient, and in danger of deviating from what is right; and therefore stand in need of virtuous habits, for a security against this danger. For, together with the general principle of moral (a)
understanding, we have in our inward frame various affections towards particular external objects. These affections

are naturally, and of right, subject to the government of the moral principle, as to the occasions upon which they may be gratified; as to the times, degrees, and manner, in which the objects of them may be pursued; but then the principle of virtue can neither excite them, nor prevent their being excited. On the contrary, they are naturally felt, when the objects of them are present to the mind, not only before all consideration, whether they can be obtained by lawful means, but after it is found they cannot. For the natural objects of affection continue so; the necessaries, conveniences, and pleasures of life, remain naturally desirable; though they cannot be obtained innocently: nay, though they cannot possibly be obtained at all. And when the objects of any affection whatever cannot be obtained without unlawful means; but may be obtained by them: such affection, though its being excited, and its continuing some time in the mind, be as innocent as it is natural and necessary; yet cannot but be conceived to have a tendency to incline persons to venture upon such unlawful means: and therefore must be conceived
(b) as putting them in some danger of it. Now, what is the general security against this danger: against their actually deviating from right? As the danger is, so also must the security be, from within: from the practical principle of virtue.[8] And the strengthening or improving this principle,

[8] It may be thought, that sense of interest would as effectually restrain creatures from doing wrong. But if by a *sense of interest* is meant a speculative conviction or belief that such and such indulgence would occasion them greater uneasiness, upon the whole, than satisfaction; it is contrary to present experience to say that this sense of interest is sufficient to restrain them from thus indulging themselves. And if by a *sense of interest* is meant a practical regard to what is upon the whole our happiness, this is not only coincident with the principle of virtue or moral rectitude, but is a part of the idea itself. And it is evident this reasonable self-love wants to be improved, as really as any principle in our nature. For we daily see it overmatched, not only by the more boisterous passions, but by curiosity, shame, love of imitation, by anything, even indolence: especially if the interest, the temporal interest, suppose, which is the end of such self-love, be at a distance. So greatly are profligate men mistaken when they affirm they are wholly governed by interestedness and self-love. And so little cause is there for moralists to disclaim this principle. See pp. [illegible], [illegible].

considered as practical, or as a principle of action, will lessen the danger, or increase the security against it. And this moral principle is capable of improvement, by proper discipline and exercise: by recollecting the practical impressions which example and experience have made upon us: and, instead of following humour and mere inclination, by continually attending to the equity and right of the case, in whatever we are engaged, be it in greater or less matters: and accustoming ourselves always to act upon it; as being itself the just and natural motive of action; and as this moral course of behaviour must necessarily, under Divine government, be our final interest. *Thus the principle of virtue, improved into a habit, of which improvement we are thus capable, will plainly be, in proportion to the strength of it, a security against the danger which finite creatures are in, from the very nature of propension, or particular affections.* This way of putting the matter, supposes particular affections to remain in a future state, which it is scarce possible to avoid supposing. And if they do, we clearly see, that acquired habits of virtue and self-government may be necessary for the regulation of them. However, though we were not distinctly to take in this supposition, but to speak only in general, the thing really comes to the same. For habits of virtue, thus acquired by discipline, are improvement in virtue: and improvement in virtue must be advancement in happiness, if the government of the universe be moral.

From these things we may observe, and it will further show this our natural and original need of being improved by discipline, how it comes to pass, that creatures made upright fall; and that those who preserve their uprightness, by so doing, raise themselves to a more secure state of virtue. To say that the former is accounted for by the nature of liberty, is to say no more, than that an event's actually happening is accounted for by a mere possibility of its happening. But it seems distinctly conceivable from the very nature of particular affections or propensions. For, suppose creatures intended for such a particular state of life, for which such propensions were necessary: suppose them endued with such propensions, together with moral understanding, as well including a practical sense of virtue, as a speculative perception of it; and that all these several principles, both natural and

moral, forming an inward constitution of mind, were in the most exact proportion possible; *i. e.*, in a proportion the most exactly adapted to their intended state of life; such creatures would be made upright, or finitely perfect. Now particular propensions, from their very nature, must be felt, the objects of them being present;[9] though they cannot be gratified at all, or not with the allowance of the moral principle. But if they can be gratified without its allowance, or by contradicting it, then they must be conceived to have some tendency in how low a degree soever, yet some tendency, to induce persons to such forbidden gratification. This tendency, in some one particular propension, may be increased, by the greater frequency of occasions naturally exciting it, than of occasions exciting others. The least voluntary indulgence in forbidden circumstances, though but in thought, will increase this wrong tendency; and may increase it further, till, peculiar conjunctures perhaps conspiring, it becomes effect; and danger of deviating from right, ends in actual deviation from it: a danger necessarily arising from the very nature of propension; and which therefore could not have been prevented, though it might have been escaped, or got innocently through.[10] The case would be, as if we were to suppose a straight path marked out for a person, in which such a degree of attention would keep him steady: but if he would not attend in this degree, any one of a thousand objects, catching his eye, might lead him out of it. Now it is impossible to say, how much even the first full overt act of irregu-

[9] [This is the thought which Dr. O'Brien has expanded in illustrating the temptation of our Lord, showing that Christ might be *tempted*, yet be without sin.—Two Sermons upon Heb. iv. 15, preached in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin [1832].

[10] [This supposed case is, it will be noticed, a most just history of the fall. In that history we have—the conviction of duty, the contemplation of the pleasure which sin may produce, the offer on the part of the tempter of a lie in place of the truth, the hope that desire may be indulged and the punishment averted, desire growing stronger, conscience feebler, till the will consents and the act is done. This act, it must be added, is not so much a sin as a "fall." It implies the deliberate preference of a lie to the truth, of passion to conscience, of self to God. Peace and favour with him are forthwith exchanged for enmity and dread.]

larity might disorder the inward constitution; unsettle the adjustments, and alter the proportions which formed it, and in which the uprightness of its make consisted: but repetition of irregularities would produce habits. And thus the constitution would be spoiled; and creatures made upright, become corrupt and depraved in their settled character, proportionably to their repeated irregularities in occasional acts. But, on the contrary, these creatures might have improved (b) and raised themselves to a higher and more secure state of virtue, by the contrary behaviour: by steadily following the moral principle, supposed to be one part of their nature: and thus withstanding that unavoidable danger of defection, which necessarily arose from propension, the other part of it. For, by thus preserving their integrity for some time, their danger would lessen; since propensions, by being inured to submit, would do it more easily and of course: and their security against this lessening danger would increase; since the moral principle would gain additional strength by exercise: both which things are implied in the notion of virtuous habits. Thus then vicious indulgence is not only criminal in itself, but also depraves the inward constitution and character. And virtuous self-government is not only right in itself, but also improves the inward constitution or character: and may improve it to such a degree, that though we should suppose it impossible, for particular affections to be absolutely coincident with the moral principle; and consequently should allow, that such creatures as have been above supposed, would for ever remain defectible; yet their danger of actually deviating from right may be almost infinitely lessened, and they fully fortified against what remains of it; if that may be called danger, against which there is an adequate effectual security. But still, this their higher perfection may continue to consist in habits of virtue formed in a state of discipline, and this their more complete security remain to proceed from them. And thus it is plainly conceivable, that (c) creatures without blemish, as they came out of the hands of God, may be in danger of going wrong; and so may stand in need of the security of virtuous habits, additional to the moral principle wrought into their natures by him. That which is the ground of their danger, or their want of security, may be considered as a deficiency in them, to which virtuous

habits are the natural supply. And as they are naturally capable of being raised and improved by discipline, it may be a thing fit and requisite that they should be placed in circumstances with an eye to it: in circumstances peculiarly fitted to be, to them, a state of discipline for their improvement in virtue.

But how much more strongly must this hold with respect to those, who have corrupted their natures, are fallen from their original rectitude, and whose passions are become excessive by repeated violations of their inward constitution? Upright creatures may want to be improved; depraved creatures want to be renewed. Education and discipline, which may be in all degrees and sorts of gentleness and of severity, is expedient for those: but must be absolutely necessary for these. For these, discipline of the severer sort too, and in the higher degrees of it, must be necessary, in order to wear out vicious habits; to recover their primitive strength of self-government, which indulgence must have weakened; to repair, as well as raise into an habit, the moral principle, in order to their arriving at a secure state of virtuous happiness.

Now whoever will consider the thing, may clearly see, that the present world is *peculiarly fit* to be a state of discipline for this purpose, to such as will set themselves to mend and improve. For, the various temptations with which we are surrounded; our experience of the deceits of wickedness; having been in many instances led wrong ourselves; the great viciousness of the world; the infinite disorders consequent upon it; our being made acquainted with pain and sorrow, either from our own feeling of it, or from the sight of it in others; these things, though some of them may indeed produce wrong effects upon our minds, yet when duly reflected upon, have, all of them, a direct tendency to bring us to a settled moderation and reasonableness of temper: the contrary both to thoughtless levity, and also to that unrestrained self-will, and violent bent to follow present inclination, which may be observed in undisciplined minds. Such experience as the present state affords, of the frailty of our nature; of the boundless extravagance of ungoverned passion; of the power which an Infinite Being has over us, by the various capacities of misery which he has given us;

in short, that kind and degree of experience which the present state affords us, that the constitution of Nature is such as to admit the possibility, the danger, and the actual event of creatures losing their innocence and happiness, and becoming vicious and wretched; hath a tendency to give us a practical sense of things very different from a mere speculative knowledge, that we are liable to vice, and capable of misery. And who knows, whether the security of creatures in the highest and most settled state of perfection, may not in part arise, from their having had such a sense of things as this, formed, and habitually fixed within them, in some state of probation?[11] And passing through the present world with that moral attention which is necessary to the acting a right part in it, may leave everlasting impressions of this sort upon our minds. But to be a little more distinct: allurements to what is wrong; difficulties in the discharge of our duty; our not being able to act an uniform right part without some thought and care; and the opportunities which we have, or imagine we have, of avoiding what we dislike, or obtaining what we desire, by unlawful means, when we either cannot do it at all, or at least not so easily, by lawful ones; these things, *i. e.*, the snares and temptations of vice, are what render the present world peculiarly fit to be a state of discipline, to those who will preserve their integrity: because they render being upon our guard, resolution, and the denial of our passions, necessary in order to that end. And the exercise of such particular recollection, intention of mind, and self-government, in the practice of virtue, has, from the make of our nature, a peculiar tendency to form

[11] [The force of this remark must not be overlooked. The fall of angels shows that even in a state where there is no evil, temptations to evil may spring up, and that to resist them men may need characters disciplined on earth. Or to speak perhaps more accurately, things innocent may become temptations to undisciplined natures, while natures thoroughly disciplined would never feel them. Of course, God has pledged his word to the perpetuity of that heavenly state—sin shall never enter it—and he might secure the fulfilment of it by making sin physically impossible: but he seems rather to act in accordance with the moral nature he has given us. Heaven will be for us secure, because our holiness will be by discipline made perfect.]

habits of virtue: as implying, not only a real but also a more continued, and a more intense exercise of the virtuous principle; or a more constant and a stronger effort of virtue exerted into act. Thus suppose a person to know himself to be in particular danger, for some time, of doing anything wrong, which yet he fully resolves not to do: continued recollection, and keeping upon his guard, in order to make good his resolution, is a *continued* exerting of that act of virtue in a *high degree*, which need have been, and perhaps would have been, only *instantaneous* and *weak*, had the temptation been so. It is indeed ridiculous to assert, that self-denial is essential to virtue and piety: but it would have been nearer the truth, though not strictly the truth itself, to have said, that it is essential to discipline and improvement. For though actions materially virtuous, which have no sort of difficulty, but are perfectly agreeable to our particular inclinations, may possibly be done only from these particular inclinations, and so may not be any exercise of the principle of virtue, *i. e.*, not be virtuous actions at all; yet, on the contrary, they may be an exercise of that principle: and when they are, they have a tendency to form and fix the habit of virtue. But when the exercise of the virtuous principle is more continued, oftener repeated, and more intense; as it must be in circumstances of danger, temptation, and difficulty, of any kind and in any degree; this tendency is increased proportionably, and a more confirmed habit is the consequence.[18]

[18] [It is here—when describing man's recovery, Butler speaks of nothing more as necessary than a strenuous and sustained effort on our part to acquire new habits of holiness—that our author's theology seems defective. Now the teaching of Scripture is, that an *entire* change in the condition of our moral faculties, what may be called a complete renovation of them, is indispensable to our holiness—that men, unassisted from above, do not, and of themselves, will not effect such a change—that this change, which *begins* their new life, is effected by a Divine influence and through the truth of the gospel. All this must be kept in mind when interpreting evangelically this first part of Butler's treatise. . . . At the same time, Butler's reasoning is complete as it stands, for under the economy of grace the law of habit has *not* been repealed, nor has any other of the laws of human nature, on which this argument proceeds. . . .

This undoubtedly holds to a certain length; but how far it may hold I know not. Neither our intellectual powers nor our bodily strength can be improved beyond such a degree; and both may be over-wrought. Possibly there may be somewhat analogous to this, with respect to the moral character, which is scarce worth considering. And I mention it only, lest it should come into some persons' thoughts, not as an exception to the foregoing observations which perhaps it is, but as a confutation of them, which it is not: and there may be several other exceptions. Observations of this kind cannot be supposed to hold minutely, and in every case. It is enough that they hold in general. And these plainly hold so far, as that from them they may be seen distinctly, which is all that is intended by them, that *the present world is peculiarly fit to be a state of discipline, for our improvement in virtue and piety;* in the same sense as some sciences, by requiring and engaging the attention, not, to be sure, of such persons as will not, but of such as will, set themselves to them, are fit to form the mind to habits of attention.

Indeed the present state is so far from proving, in event, a discipline of virtue to the generality of men, that on the contrary, they seem to make it a discipline of vice. And the viciousness of the world is in different ways the great temptation, which renders it a state of virtuous discipline, in the degree it is, to good men. The whole end and the

It should be remembered, too, in defence of Butler, that all through this first part he is discussing *natural* religion, and using language appropriate to it. Truths and forms of expression borrowed from the New Testament would therefore be less appropriate. The mistake will be with the reader, if he regard Butler's phraseology here as adapted to set forth the whole of the gospel.

'The principle of virtue' of which Butler speaks is in evangelical language, and for fallen man, faith in the doctrine of the cross—"the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Let a man once admit that Christ is the gift of the Father's love; that in dying he did homage to the sanctity of law; that we deserve what he suffered; that in pleading his death, we acknowledge our sin, and must resolve to be freed from it, looking to God's grace for help; and all is changed. God is regarded with confidence, sin with abhorrence, the law with reverence, Christ with love, and in the end "the world is crucified (and thus powerless) to us, and we unto the world."]

whole occasion of mankind's being placed in such a state as
a the present, is not pretended to be accounted for. That
which appears amidst the general corruption, is that there
are some persons who having within them the principle of
amendment and recovery, attend to and follow the notices
of virtue and religion, be they more clear or more obscure,
which are afforded them; and that the present world is not
b only an exercise of virtue in these persons but an exercise of
it in ways and degrees, peculiarly apt to improve it; apt to
improve it, in some respects, even beyond what would be by
the exercise of it required in a perfectly virtuous society, or
in a society of equally imperfect virtue with themselves.
But that the present world does not actually become a state
of moral discipline to many, even to the generality, *i. e.* that
they do not improve or grow better in it, cannot be urged as
2 a proof that it was not intended for moral discipline by any
who at all observe the analogy of Nature. For, of the
numerous seeds of vegetables and bodies of animals, which
are adapted and put in the way, to improve to such a point
or state of natural maturity and perfection, we do not see
perhaps that one in a million actually does. Far the greatest
part of them decay before they are improved to it, and
appear to be absolutely destroyed. Yet no one, who does
not deny all final causes, will deny that those seeds and
bodies, which do attain to that point of maturity and perfection,
answer the end for which they were really designed
by Nature; and therefore that Nature designed them for
such perfection. And I cannot forbear adding, though it is
not to the present purpose, that the *appearance* of such an
amazing *waste* in Nature, with respect to these seeds and
bodies, by foreign causes, is to us as unaccountable, as what
is much more terrible, the present and future ruin of so many
moral agents by themselves, *i. e.* by vice.

3 Against this whole notion of moral discipline, it may be
objected in another way, that so far as a course of behaviour,
materially virtuous, proceeds from hope and fear, so
far it is only a discipline and strengthening of self-love.[18]

[18] [Hobbes had maintained that "fear and hope" were the chief
springs of what men call virtue. Later, Shaftesbury had taken a
juster view, holding that these are but selfish motives to virtue,

But doing what God commands, because he commands it, is obedience, though it proceeds from hope or fear. And a course of such obedience will form habits of it. And a constant regard to veracity, justice, and charity, may form distinct habits of those particular virtues, and will certainly form habits of self-government, and of denying our inclinations, whenever veracity, justice, or charity requires it. Nor is there any foundation for this great nicety, with which some affect to distinguish in this case, in order to depreciate all religion proceeding from hope or fear. For veracity, justice, and charity, regard to God's authority, and to our own chief interest, are not only all three coincident, but each of them is, in itself, a just and natural motive or principle of action. And he who begins a good life from any one of them, and perseveres in it, as he is already in some degree, so he cannot fail of becoming more and more, of that character, which is correspondent to the constitution of Nature as moral; and to the relation which God stands in to us as moral Governor of it; nor consequently can he fail of obtaining that happiness,[14] which this constitution and relation necessarily suppose connected with that character.

These several observations concerning the active principle of virtue and obedience to God's commands, are applicable to passive submission or resignation to his will; which is another essential part of a right character, connected with the former, and very much in our power to form ourselves to. It may be imagined that nothing but afflictions can give occasion for or require this virtue; that it can have no respect to nor be any way necessary to qualify for, a state

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though sometimes efficacious in "reclaiming from vice, and in guarding a feeble penitence" (Mackintosh). Butler substantially agrees in this view. Both, however, admit that there is a hope of heaven identical with the love of holiness itself, and a fear of hell identical with the dread of sin—the hope that in heaven sin will cease. "The holiness of heaven is (in this view), still more attractive than its happiness,"—(T. Erskine, 'Freeness of the Gospel,' p. 32;) and the hope of it is one of the noblest motives to virtue.]

[14] [So John Smith: "Happiness and holiness are but two several notions of one thing. Hell is rather a nature than a place, and heaven cannot be so well defined by anything *without* us, as by something *within*.—'Select Discourses.']

of perfect happiness; but it is not experience which can
4 make us think thus. Prosperity itself, whilst anything supposed desirable is not ours, begets extravagant and un-
a bounded thoughts. Imagination is altogether as much a source of discontent, as anything in our external condition. It is indeed true, that there can be no scope for patience, when sorrow shall be no more; but there may be need of a temper of mind, which shall have been formed by patience. For though self-love, considered merely as an active principle leading us to pursue our chief interest, cannot but be uniformly coincident with the principle of obedience to God's commands, our interest being rightly understood; because this obedience and the pursuit of our own chief interest, must be in every case one and the same thing; yet it may be questioned whether self-love, considered merely as the desire of our own interest or happiness, can, from its nature, be thus absolutely and uniformly coincident with the will of God; any more than particular affections can;[14] coincident in such sort, as not to be liable to be excited upon occasions and in degrees, impossible to be gratified consistently with
b the constitution of things, or the Divine appointments. So that *habits* of resignation may, upon this account, be requisite for all creatures; habits I say, which signify what is formed by use. However, in general it is obvious that both self-love and particular affections in human creatures, considered only as passive feelings, distort and rend the mind; and therefore stand in need of discipline. Now, denial of those particular affections, in the course of active virtue and obedience to God's will, has a tendency to moderate them; and seems also to have a tendency to habituate the mind, to be easy and satisfied with that degree of happiness which is allotted us, *i. e.* to moderate self-love. But the proper discipline for resignation is affliction. For a right behaviour under that trial, recollecting ourselves so as to consider it in the view in which religion teaches us to consider it, as from the hand of God; receiving it as what he appoints, or thinks proper to permit, in his world and under his government; this will habituate the mind to a dutiful submission; and such submission, together with the active principle of

[14] P. 84.

obedience, make up the temper and character in us, which answers to his sovereignty, and which absolutely belongs to the condition of our being, as dependent creatures. Nor can it be said that this is only breaking the mind to a submission to mere power; for mere power may be accidental, and precarious, and usurped; but it is forming within ourselves the temper of resignation to His rightful authority, who is by nature, supreme over all.[15]

Upon the whole, such a character and such qualifications are necessary for a mature state of life in the present world, as nature alone does in no wise bestow; but has put it upon us, in great part, to acquire in our progress from one stage of life to another, from childhood to mature age; put it upon us to acquire them, by giving us capacities of doing it, and by placing us in the beginning of life, in a condition fit for it. And this is a general analogy to our condition in the present world, as in a state of moral discipline for another. It is in vain then to object against the credibility of the present life's being intended for this purpose, that all the trouble and the danger, unavoidably accompanying such discipline, might have been saved us, by our being made at once the creatures and the characters, *which we were to be*. For we experience, that *what we were to be*, was to be the effect of *what we would do*; and that the general conduct of nature is, not to save us trouble or danger, but to make us capable of going through them, and to put it upon us to do so. Acquirements of our own experience and habits, are the *natural* supply to our deficiencies, and security against our dangers; since it is as plainly natural to set ourselves to acquire the qualifications, as the external things which we stand in need of. In particular, it is as plainly a general law of Nature, that we should, with regard to our temporal

15 [Professor Fitzgerald adds here an instructive suggestion, "while the general union of utility with virtue answers a plain moral purpose, the occasional apparent interruption of that connexion—so that virtue brings disadvantages—may answer a moral purpose also." Virtue promotes happiness, God therefore is upon its side, and it becomes us to be virtuous. Virtue is not *always* followed by happiness, God therefore means us to love it for its own sake. "My yoke is easy," illustrates the first truth; "Take up your *cross* and follow me," the second.]

interest, form and cultivate practical principles within us, by attention, use, and discipline, as anything whatever is a natural law; chiefly in the beginning of life, but also throughout the whole course of it. And the alternative is left to our choice, either to improve ourselves, and better our condition, or in default of such improvement to remain deficient and wretched. It is, therefore, perfectly credible from the analogy of Nature, that the same may be our case, with respect to the happiness of a future state, and the qualifications necessary for it.

There is a third thing, which may seem implied in the present world's being a state of probation; that it is a theatre of action, for the manifestation of persons' characters with respect to a future one; not to be sure to an all-knowing Being, but to this creation or part of it. This may, perhaps, be only a consequence of our being in a state of probation in the other senses. However, it is not impossible that men's showing and making manifest what is in their heart, what their real character is, may have respect to a future life, in ways and manners which we are not acquainted with; particularly it may be a means, for the Author of Nature does not appear to do anything without means, of their being disposed of suitably to their characters, and of its being known to the creation by way of example, that they are thus disposed of. But not to enter upon any conjectural account of this, one may just mention, that the manifestation of persons' characters contributes very much in various ways, to the carrying on a great part of that general course of Nature, respecting mankind, which comes under our observation at present. I shall only add, that probation, in both these senses, as well as in that treated of in the foregoing chapter, is implied in moral government; since by persons' behaviour under it, their characters cannot but be manifested, and if they behave well, improved.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE OPINION OF NECESSITY, CONSIDERED AS INFLUENCING PRACTICE.

[On the supposition that necessity is reconcilable with the experienced constitution of Nature, the question, Is it also with religion: answered in the affirmative.

Thus far the controversy has been with the deist. Atheism, however, may be supposed to maintain that necessity itself accounts for the existence of things—an opinion which needs first to be examined.

A Does necessity (supposed reconcilable with Nature) destroy the proof of an intelligent Author, and so support Atheism? No; for,

1 Necessity does not set aside an agent;

2 Nor does it exclude design and intelligence, either in men or in God.

3 It is true that men ascribe (in a loose way) the existence of God to necessity; but this is a new meaning of the word, and is intended merely to imply that, prior to design in Nature, there must be a Divine existence. Answer restated.

B Does necessity, supposed reconcilable with Nature, destroy the belief that we are under moral government? No; for,

1 In practical matters (therefore religion included) necessity is as if it were false: *e.g.*,

a Let a child act upon it, and he will find that it is either not true, or not acted upon as true.

b Or a man in common life. Hence, probably, men are free. Upon this, however, Butler does not here insist.

Nor let any be surprised that, upon the opinion of necessity being true, we act upon it as false, and thence blame our reason; for God has given us practical principles, which we follow instead of reason, and to object to these is mere conceit.

2 Necessity, if true, is reconcilable with the possession of a moral character, the foundation of veracity, benevolence, and justice, both in us and in God.

a That he possesses such a character is shown by his natural character, and by final causes.

b Necessity is reconcilable with *some* kind of character in us; for it hinders neither truth nor falsehood.

If this be denied, and it be said, Admit necessity, and there can be no moral character in us, and so no just punishment. Answer, The necessity which destroys the injustice of an act destroys the injustice of a punishment; and, after all, our conviction of a character remains: we still deem ourselves just or unjust, necessity notwithstanding.

c So necessity is reconcilable with the character of God: as reconcilable with veracity and justice as with any other.

Obj. And if it be objected that necessity destroys the proof of such character, by making the happiness that follows virtue a mere necessity, and no part of God's arrangement—answer,

1 Happiness follows conduct, and is a consequence of *it*, and not of necessity or fate: besides,

2 God governs according to some rule; and veracity and justice seem the natural rule with One who can have no competition with his creatures.

6 Nor, further, does necessity destroy the obligations and proofs of religion, such as the following:

1 The proof, from final causes, of an intelligent Creator;

2 The proof, from present government, of a future government;

3 The proof, from our moral faculty, of the final reward of virtue: Which faculty is a rule, having authority, and enforcing its decisions with sanctions. Every rule implies such sanctions. But, in this rule, the sanctions are expressed in the very sense of good or ill desert connected with it, and the dread of future punishment.

Nor does any objection of necessity lie against this faculty or its conclusions; the existence of the faculty being a fact, and the conclusion being drawn immediately from it.

4 This reasoning is confirmed by various facts, such as the tendencies of virtue and vice; the punishment of vice, as mischievous to society, and as vice.

5 The external evidence of religion, as,

a The general consent of all ages and countries:

b The early belief in religion, which implies either the naturalness of religion, or the Divine origin of it; which latter is probable on various grounds: and,

c Ancient tradition of a revelation, which has force irrespective of the claims of any particular book, or the present purity of any religious system.

Note carefully, that in studying all such doctrines our faculties are peculiarly liable to err; so that, though we are not to neglect them, we must be on our guard.

D After all, the objector may say, I cannot confute this argument, or answer these proofs; nor need I. We are not free, whatever we think, and so are not to be punished; and any system that affirms we are must be rejected. But answer, Experience shows

The conclusion is false wherever the fallacy lies. Either we are free and so punished; or, being necessary agents we are punished still,—now and in the life to come.

From the whole gather a double conclusion:

1 Necessity, supposed consistent with the present constitution of things, does in no sort prove that we shall not be rewarded eternally according to our deserts; nor does it affect the proof that we shall. It leaves untouched all religion, natural and revealed.

2 Hence the only senses in which necessity, if taught in religion, can be said to destroy religion:

   a Practically, by leading atheists to encourage themselves in vice:

   b Really, by contradicting our experience that we are free, and the course of Nature:

   c Though not in this sense, that it is reconcilable with Nature, but not with religion.]

Throughout the foregoing treatise it appears, that the condition of mankind, considered as inhabitants of this world only, and under the government of God which we experience, is greatly analogous to our condition, as designed for another world, or under that further government, which religion teaches us. If therefore any assert, as a fatalist must, that the opinion of universal necessity[1] is reconcilable with the

[1] [There are few words in the English language more ambiguous than "necessity." It is used in three senses, distinct, yet in some connexions not dissimilar. (1.) Sometimes it expresses the relation of cause and effect, or of things uniformly connected, and so of premises and conclusion. The world has necessarily a Creator; death is a necessity of our present state; the angles of a triangle are necessarily equal to two right angles, are examples. (2.) Sometimes it expresses the opposite of freedom—compulsion against one's will. (3.) It expresses also the opposite of doubt—certainty of knowledge, applied properly to the thing known; *e.g.*, God foresees our acts, therefore they are necessary. Now the only sense of neces-

former, there immediately arises a question in the way of analogy, whether he must not also own it to be reconcilable with the latter, *i. e.* with the system of religion itself, and the proof of it. The reader then will observe, that the question now before us is not absolute, Whether the opinion of fate be reconcilable with religion; but hypothetical, Whether, upon supposition of its being reconcilable with the constitution of Nature, it be not reconcilable with religion also: or what pretence a fatalist, not other persons, but a fatalist, has to conclude from his opinion, that there can be no such thing as religion. And as the puzzle and obscurity, which must unavoidably arise from arguing upon so absurd a supposition as that of universal necessity, will, I fear, easily be seen; it will, I hope, as easily be excused.

But since it has been all along taken for granted, as a thing proved, that there is an intelligent Author of Nature, or natural Governor of the world; and since an objection may be made against the proof of this, from the opinion of universal necessity, as it may be supposed, that such necessity will itself account for the origin and preservation of all things: it is requisite that this objection be distinctly answered, or that it be shown that a fatality, supposed consistent with what we certainly experience, does not destroy
A the proof of an intelligent Author and Governor of Nature; before we proceed to consider whether it destroys the proof

sity in which it can be said to destroy responsibility is the *second*; though many (and Butler among them) have attempted to show that responsibility must be destroyed by admitting necessity in the first, or, indeed, in any sense. God may foreknow every act of every moral agent, and so those acts be (in the third sense) necessary. He may even see causes and influences at work which will end in those acts, and so those acts be necessary in the *first* sense, and yet every moral agent be free; that is, the agent will act voluntarily and without constraint. The moral agent is in each case responsible; nor does that responsibility cease till he acts necessarily in the second sense, and things are done under compulsion and against his will. These distinctions are not necessary to an appreciation of Butler's main reasoning; but they are important in estimating his opinion on necessity, and in deciding various theological questions. See Whately's Notes to King on Predestination, and Isaac Taylor's Essay on Edwards on the Will.]

of a moral Governor of it, or of our being in a state of
religion.

Now when it is said by a fatalist that the whole consti-
tution of Nature and the actions of men, that everything,
and every mode and circumstance of everything, is necessary,
and could not possibly have been otherwise; it is to be
observed, that this necessity does not exclude deliberation, 1
choice, preference, and acting from certain principles, and to
certain ends: because all this is matter of undoubted ex-
perience, acknowledged by all, and what every man may,
every moment, be conscious of. And from hence it follows
that necessity, alone and of itself, is in no sort an account of
the constitution of Nature, and how things came *to be* and *to
continue* as they are; but only an account of this *circumstance* 2
relating to their origin and continuance, that they could not
have been otherwise than they are and have been. The
assertion that everything is by necessity of Nature, is not an
answer to the question, Whether the world came into being
as it is, by an intelligent agent forming it thus, or not; but
to quite another question, Whether it came into being as it
is, in that way and manner which we call *necessarily*, or in
that way and manner which we call *freely*. For suppose
further that one who was a fatalist, and one who kept to
this natural sense of things, and believed himself a free
agent, were disputing together and vindicating their respec-
tive opinions, and they should happen to instance in a house;
they would agree that it was built by an architect. Their
difference concerning necessity and freedom would occasion
no difference of judgment concerning this, but only concern-
ing another matter, whether the architect built it necessarily
or freely. Suppose then they should proceed to inquire con-
cerning the constitution of Nature: in a lax way of speaking,
one of them might say it was by necessity, and the other by
freedom; but if they had any meaning to their words, as
the latter must mean a free agent, so the former must at
length be reduced to mean an agent, whether he would say
one or more, acting by necessity; for abstract notions can
do nothing. Indeed we ascribe to God a necessary existence,
uncaused by any agent. For we find within ourselves the
idea of infinity, *i.e.* immensity and eternity, impossible, even

in imagination, to be removed out of being. We seem to
discern intuitively, that there must, and cannot but be some-
(2) what external to ourselves, answering this idea, or the
archetype of it. And from hence (for *this abstract*, as much
as any other, implies a *concrete*) we conclude that there is,
and cannot but be, an infinite, an immense eternal Being ex-
isting, prior to all design contributing to his existence, and
3 exclusive of it.[2] And from the scantiness of language, a
manner of speaking has been introduced, that necessity is the foundation, the reason, the account of the existence of God. But it is not alleged, nor can it be at all intended, that *everything* exists as it does by this kind of necessity, a necessity antecedent in Nature to design: it cannot, I say, be meant that everything exists as it does, by this kind of necessity, upon several accounts; and particularly because it is admitted that design, in the actions of men, contributes to many alterations in Nature. For if any deny this, I shall not pretend to reason with them.

From these things it follows, first, That when a fatalist asserts that everything is *by necessity*, he must mean *by an agent* acting *necessarily*; he must I say mean this, for I am very sensible he would not choose to mean it: and secondly, That the necessity by which such an agent is supposed to act does not exclude intelligence and design. So that, were the system of fatality admitted, it would just as much account for the formation of the world as for the structure of a house, and no more. Necessity as much requires and supposes a necessary agent, as freedom requires and supposes a free agent to be the former of the world. And the appearances of *design* and of *final causes* in the constitution of Nature as really prove this acting agent to be an *intelligent designer*, or to act from choice, upon the scheme of necessity, supposed possible, as upon that of freedom.

B It appearing thus that the notion of necessity does not

[2] [This argument—that because there is in us the idea of infinity, *therefore* there must be an infinite Being—is not now deemed very satisfactory, though it was a favourite one in Butler's day, and is sanctioned by Cudworth, Waterland, and Samuel Clarke. Butler, it will be noticed, expresses his approval only incidentally; and his reasoning—that "abstract notions can do nothing"—is still sound,

destroy the proof that there is an intelligent Author of Nature and natural Governor of the world, the present question, which the analogy before mentioned suggests,[3] and which, I think, it will answer, is this: Whether the opinion of necessity, supposed consistent with possibility, with the constitution of the world, and the natural government which we experience exercised over it, destroys all reasonable ground of belief that we are in a state of religion, or whether that opinion be reconcilable with religion, with the system, and the proof of it.

Suppose then a fatalist to educate any one, from his youth up, in his own principles; that the child should reason upon them, and conclude, that since he cannot possibly behave otherwise than he does, he is not a subject of blame or commendation, nor can deserve to be rewarded or punished: imagine him to eradicate the very perceptions of blame and commendation out of his mind by means of this system; to form his temper, and character, and behaviour to it; and from it to judge of the treatment he was to expect, say from reasonable men, upon his coming abroad into the world; as the fatalist judges from this system what he is to expect from the Author of Nature, and with regard to a future state. I cannot forbear stopping here to ask, whether any one of common sense would think fit that a child should be put upon these speculations, and be left to apply them to practice. And a man has little pretence to reason who is not sensible that we are all children in speculations of this kind. However, the child would doubtless be highly delighted to find himself freed from the restraints of fear and shame with which his playfellows were fettered and embarrassed, and highly conceited in his superior knowledge so far beyond his years. But conceit and vanity would be the least bad part of the influence which these principles must have, when thus reasoned and acted upon during the course of his education. He must either be allowed to go on and be the plague of all about him, and himself too, even to his own destruction: or else correction must be continually made use of, to supply the want of those natural perceptions of blame and commendation which we have supposed

[3] P. 115.

to be removed, and to give him a practical impression of what he had reasoned himself out of the belief of, that he was in fact an accountable child, and to be punished for doing what he was forbid. It is therefore in reality impossible but that the correction which he must meet with, in the course of his education, must convince him, that if the scheme he was instructed in were not false, yet that he reasoned inconclusively upon it, and somehow or other misapplied it to practice and common life; as what the fatalist experiences of the conduct of Providence at present ought in all reason to convince him, that this scheme is misapplied when applied to the subject of religion.[4] But supposing the child's temper could remain still formed to the system, and his expectation of the treatment he was to have in the world be regulated by it, so as to expect that no reasonable man would blame or punish him for anything which he should do, because he could not help doing it: upon this supposition it is manifest he would, upon his coming abroad into the world, be insupportable to society, and the treatment which he would receive from it would render it so to him; and he could not fail of doing somewhat, very soon, for which he would be delivered over into the hands of civil justice. And thus, in the end, he would be convinced of the obligations he was under to his wise instructor. Or suppose this scheme of fatality, in any other way applied to practice, such practical application of it will be found equally absurd, equally fallacious in a practical sense: for instance, that if a man be destined to live such a time, he shall live to it, though he take no care of his own preservation; or if he be destined to die before that time, no care can prevent it: therefore all care about preserving one's life is to be neglected, which is the fallacy instanced in by the ancients. But now, on the contrary, none of these practical absurdities can be drawn from reasoning upon the supposition that we are free; but all such reasoning with regard to the common affairs of life is justified by experience. And therefore, though it were admitted that this opinion of necessity were speculatively true, yet, with regard to practice, it is as if it were false, so far as our experience reaches; that is, to the

[4] P. 126.

whole of our present life. For the constitution of the present world, and the condition in which we are actually placed, is as if we were free. And it may perhaps justly be concluded, that since the whole process of action, through every step of it, suspense, deliberation, inclining one way, determining, and at last doing as we determine, is as if we were free, therefore we are so. But the thing here insisted upon is, that under the present natural government of the world, we find we are treated and dealt with as if we were free, prior to all consideration whether we are or not. Were this opinion therefore of necessity admitted to be ever so true, yet such is in fact our condition and the natural course of things, that whenever we apply it to life and practice, this application of it always misleads us, and cannot but mislead us, in a most dreadful manner, with regard to our present interest. And how can people think themselves so very secure then, that the same application of the same opinion may not mislead them also, in some analogous manner, with respect to a future, a more general and more important interest? For religion being a practical subject, and the analogy of Nature showing us that we have not faculties to apply this opinion, were it a true one, to practical subjects; whenever we do apply it to the subject of religion, and thence conclude that we are free from its obligations, it is plain this conclusion cannot be depended upon. There will still remain just reason to think, whatever appearances are, that we deceive ourselves; in somewhat of a like manner as when people fancy they can draw contradictory conclusions from the idea of infinity.

From these things together the attentive reader will see it follows, that if upon supposition of freedom the evidence of religion be conclusive, it remains so upon supposition of necessity, because the notion of necessity is not applicable to practical subjects: *i. e.* with respect to them, is as if it were not true. Nor does this contain any reflection upon reason, but only upon what is unreasonable. For to pretend to act upon reason, in opposition to practical principles, which the Author of our nature gave us to act upon; and to pretend to apply our reason to subjects with regard to which our own short views, and even our experience will show us it cannot be depended upon; and such, at best, the

subject of necessity must be; this is vanity, conceit, and unreasonableness.

3 But this is not all. For we find within ourselves a will, and are conscious of a character. Now if this, in us, be reconcilable with fate, it is reconcilable with it in the Author of Nature. And besides, natural government and final causes imply a character and a will in the Governor and
a Designer;[5] a will concerning the creatures whom he governs. The Author of Nature then being certainly of some character or other, notwithstanding necessity, it is evident this necessity is as reconcilable with the particular character of benevolence, veracity, and justice in him, which attributes are the foundation of religion, as with any other character:
b since we find this necessity no more hinders *men* from being benevolent than cruel, true than faithless, just than unjust, or if the fatalist pleases, what we call unjust. For it is said indeed, that what upon supposition of freedom would be just punishment, upon supposition of necessity becomes manifestly unjust, because it is punishment inflicted for doing that which persons could not avoid doing. As if the necessity, which is supposed to destroy the injustice of murder, for instance, would not also destroy the injustice of punishing it. However, as little to the purpose as this objection is in itself, it is very much to the purpose to observe from it how the notions of justice and injustice remain, even whilst we endeavour to suppose them removed; how they force themselves upon the mind, even whilst we are making suppositions destructive of them; for there is not perhaps a man in the world but would be ready to make this objection at first thought.

Obj. But though it is most evident that universal necessity, if it be reconcilable with anything, is reconcilable with that character in the Author of Nature, which is the foundation of religion; "yet does it not plainly destroy the proof that he is of that character, and consequently the proof of religion?" By no means. For we find that happiness and

[5] By *will* and *character* is meant that which, in speaking of men, we should express, not only by these words, but also by the words *temper, taste, dispositions, practical principles, that whole frame of mind, from whence we act in one manner rather than another.*

misery are not our fate, in any such sense as not to be the consequences of our behaviour, but that they are the consequences of it.[6] We find God exercises the same kind of government over us, with that which a father exercises over his children, and a civil magistrate over his subjects. Now, whatever becomes of abstract questions concerning liberty and necessity, it evidently appears to us that veracity and justice must be the natural rule and measure of exercising this authority or government, to a Being who can have no competitions or interfering of interests with his creatures and his subjects.

But as the doctrine of liberty, though we experience its truth, may be perplexed with difficulties, which run up into the most abstruse of all speculations, and as the opinion of necessity seems to be the very basis upon which infidelity grounds itself, it may be of some use to offer a more particular proof of the obligations of religion, which may distinctly be shown not to be destroyed by this opinion.

The proof from final causes of an intelligent Author of Nature is not affected by the opinion of necessity; supposing necessity a thing possible in itself, and reconcilable with the constitution of things.[7] And it is a matter of fact, independent on this or any other speculation, that he governs the world by the method of rewards and punishments;[8] and also that he hath given us a moral faculty, by which we distinguish between actions, and approve some as virtuous and of good desert, and disapprove others as vicious and of ill desert.[9] Now this moral discernment implies, in the notion of it, a rule of action, and a rule of a very peculiar kind; for it carries in it authority and a right of direction; authority in such a sense, as that we cannot depart from it without being self-condemned.[10] And that the dictates of this moral faculty, which are by nature a rule to us, are moreover the laws of God, laws in a sense including sanctions, may be thus proved. Consciousness of a rule or guide of action, in creatures who are capable of considering it as given them by their Maker, not only raises immediately a sense of duty, but also a sense of security in following it, and of danger in

[6] Chap. ii. [7] P. 114, etc. [8] Chap. ii. [9] Dissert. II.
[10] Serm. II. at the Rolls.

deviating from it. A direction of the Author of Nature, given to creatures capable of looking upon it as such, is plainly a command from him; and a command from him necessarily includes in it, at least, an implicit promise in case of obedience, or threatening in case of disobedience. But then the sense or perception of good and ill desert,[11] which is contained in the moral discernment, renders the sanction explicit, and makes it appear, as one may say, expressed. For since his method of government is to reward and punish actions, his having annexed to some actions an inseparable sense of good desert, and to others of ill, this surely amounts to declaring upon whom his punishments shall be inflicted, and his rewards be bestowed. For he must have given us this discernment and sense of things, as a presentiment of what is to be hereafter; that is, by way of information beforehand, what we are finally to expect in this world. There is then most evident ground to think that the government of God, upon the whole, will be found to correspond to the nature which he has given us; and that in the upshot and issue of things, happiness and misery shall, in fact and event, be made to follow virtue and vice respectively; as he has already, in so peculiar a manner, associated the ideas of them in our minds. And from hence might easily be deduced the obligations of religious worship, were it only to be considered as a means of preserving upon our minds a sense of this moral government of God, and securing our obedience to it; which yet is an extremely imperfect view of that most important duty.

Now I say, no objection from necessity can lie against this general proof of religion. None against the proposition reasoned upon, that we have such a moral faculty and discernment; because this is a mere matter of fact, a thing of experience, that human kind is thus constituted; none against the conclusion, because it is immediate and wholly from this fact. For the conclusion, that God will finally reward the righteous and punish the wicked, is not here drawn, from its appearing to us fit[12] that *he should*; but from

[11] Dissert. II.

[12] However, I am far from intending to deny that the will of God is determined by what is fit, by the right and reason of the case

its appearing, that he has told us, *he will*. And this he hath certainly told us, in the promise and threatening which it hath been observed the notion of a command implies, and the sense of good and ill desert which he has given us more distinctly expresses. And this reasoning from fact is confirmed, and in some degree even verified, by other facts, by the natural tendencies of virtue and of vice;[13] and by this, that God, in the natural course of his providence, punishes vicious actions as mischievous to society, and also vicious actions as such in the strictest sense.[14] So that the general proof of religion is unanswerably real, even upon the wild supposition which we are arguing upon.

It must likewise be observed further, that natural religion hath, besides this, an external evidence; which the doctrine of necessity, if it could be true, would not affect. For suppose a person by the observations and reasoning above, or by any other, convinced of the truth of religion, that there

though one chooses to decline matters of such abstract speculation, and to speak with caution when one does speak of them. But if it be intelligible to say, that *it is fit and reasonable for every one to consult his own happiness*, then *fitness of action, or the right and reason of the case*, is an intelligible manner of speaking. And it seems as inconceivable to suppose God to approve one course of action, or one end, preferably to another, which yet his acting at all from design implies that he does, without supposing somewhat prior in that end to be the ground of the preference; as to suppose him to discern an abstract proposition to be true, without supposing somewhat prior in it, to be the ground of the discernment. It doth not therefore appear that moral right is any more relative to perception than abstract truth is; or that it is any more improper to speak of the fitness and rightness of actions and ends, as founded in the nature of things, than to speak of abstract truth as thus founded. [It will be marked that Butler rests his argument throughout, not on what is abstractedly fit, nor even on man's nature, but on admitted facts. In Part II., ch. vii., he gives reasons for this course. Here, however, he intimates his agreement with Cudworth and Clarke on the intrinsic fitness (or excellence) of morality, as in his Sermons on Human Nature he maintains its naturalness.]

[13] Pp. 66–74. [14] P. 53, etc.

is a God who made the world, who is the moral governor and judge of mankind, and will upon the whole deal with every one according to his works; I say, suppose a person convinced of this by reason, but to know nothing at all of antiquity or the present state of mankind; it would be natural for such an one to be inquisitive, what was the history of this system of doctrine; at what time, and in what manner it came first into the world; and whether it were believed by any considerable part of it. And were he upon inquiry to find that a particular person, in a late age, first of all proposed it as a deduction of reason, and that mankind were before wholly ignorant of it; then, though its evidence from reason would remain, there would be no additional probability of its truth from the account of its discovery. But instead of this being the fact of the case, on the contrary he would find, what could not but afford him a very strong confirmation of its truth: First, that somewhat of this system with more or fewer additions and alterations, hath been professed in all ages and countries, of which we have any certain information relating to this matter. Secondly, that it is certain historical fact, so far as we can trace things up, that this whole system of belief that there is one God, the Creator and moral Governor of the world, and that mankind is in a state of religion, was received in the first ages. And thirdly, that as there is no hint or intimation in history that this system was first reasoned out, so there is express historical or traditional evidence, as ancient as history, that it was taught first by revelation. Now these things must be allowed to be of great weight. The first of them, general consent, shows this system to be conformable to the common sense of mankind. The second, namely, that religion was believed in the first ages of the world, especially as it does not appear that there were then any superstitious or false additions to it, cannot but be further confirmation of its truth. For it is a proof of this alternative; either that it came into the world by revelation, or that it is natural, obvious, and forces itself upon the mind. The former of these is the conclusion of learned men. And whoever will consider how unapt for speculation rude and uncultivated minds are, will perhaps from hence alone be strongly inclined to believe it the truth.

And as it is shown in the Second Part[15] of this Treatise, that there is nothing of such peculiar presumption against a revelation in the beginning of the world, as there is supposed to be against subsequent ones: a sceptic could not, I think, give any account, which would appear more probable even to himself, of the early pretences to revelation, than by supposing some real original one from whence they were copied. And the third thing above mentioned, that there is express historical or traditional evidence, as ancient as history, of the system of religion being taught mankind by revelation, this must be admitted as some degree of real proof that it was so taught. For why should not the most ancient tradition be admitted, as some additional proof of a fact, against which there is no presumption? And this proof is mentioned here, because it has its weight to show that religion came into the world by revelation, prior to all consideration of the proper authority of any book supposed to contain it; and even prior to all consideration, whether the revelation itself be uncorruptly handed down, and related, or mixed and darkened with fables. Thus the historical account, which we have, of the origin of religion, taking in all circumstances, is a real confirmation of its truth, no way affected by the opinion of necessity. And the *external* evidence, even of natural religion, is by no means inconsiderable.

But it is carefully to be observed, and ought to be recollected after all proofs of virtue and religion, which are only general, that as speculative reason may be neglected, prejudiced, and deceived, so also may our moral understanding be impaired and perverted, and the dictates of it not impartially attended to. This indeed proves nothing against the reality of our speculative or practical faculties of perception; against their being intended by Nature to inform us in the theory of things, and instruct us how we are to behave, and what we are to expect in consequence of our behaviour. Yet our liableness, in the degree we are liable, to prejudice and perversion, is a most serious admonition to us to be upon our guard, with respect to what is of such consequence as our determinations concerning virtue and

[15] Chap. ii

religion; and particularly not to take custom and fashion, and slight notions of honour, or imaginations of present ease, use, and convenience to mankind, for the only moral rule.[16]

The foregoing observations, drawn from the nature of the thing, and the history of religion, amount, when taken together, to a real practical proof of it, not to be confuted; such a proof as, considering the infinite importance of the thing, I apprehend, would be admitted fully sufficient in reason to influence the actions of men, who act upon thought and reflection, if it were admitted that there is no proof of the contrary. But it may be said, "There are many probabilities, which cannot indeed be confuted, *i. e.* shown to be no probabilities, and yet may be overbalanced by greater probabilities on the other side, much more by demonstration. And there is no occasion to object against particular arguments alleged for an opinion, when the opinion itself may be clearly shown to be false, without meddling with such arguments at all, but leaving them just as they are.[17] Now the method of government by rewards and punishments, and especially rewarding and punishing good and ill desert as such respectively, must go upon supposition that we are free and not necessary agents. And it is incredible that the Author of Nature should govern us upon a supposition as true, which he knows to be false, and therefore absurd to think he will reward or punish us for our actions hereafter; especially that he will do it under the notion, that they are of good or ill desert." Here then the matter is brought to a point. And the answer to all this is full, and not to be evaded; that the whole constitution and course of things, the whole analogy of Providence, shows beyond possibility of doubt that the conclusion from this reasoning is false, wherever the fallacy lies. The doctrine of freedom indeed clearly shows where; in supposing ourselves necessary, when in truth we are free agents. But upon the supposition of necessity, the fallacy lies in taking for granted that it is incredible necessary agents should be rewarded and punished. But that, some how or other, the conclusion now mentioned is false, is most certain. For it is fact that God does govern

[16] Dissert. II. [17] Pp. 11, 12.

even brute creatures by the method of rewards and punishments, in the natural course of things. And men are rewarded and punished for their actions, punished for actions mischievous to society as being so, punished for vicious actions as such, by the natural instrumentality of each other, under the present conduct of Providence. Nay even the affection of gratitude, and the passion of resentment, and the rewards and punishments following from them, which in general are to be considered as natural, *i. e.* from the Author of Nature; these rewards and punishments, being naturally[18] annexed to actions considered as implying good intention and good desert, ill intention and ill desert; these natural rewards and punishments, I say, are as much a contradiction to the conclusion above, and show its falsehood, as a more exact and complete rewarding and punishing of good and ill desert as such. So that if it be incredible that necessary agents should be thus rewarded and punished, then men are not necessary but free; since it is matter of fact, that they are thus rewarded and punished. But if, on the contrary, which is the supposition we have been arguing upon, it be insisted that men are necessary agents, then there is nothing incredible in the further supposition of necessary agents being thus rewarded and punished; since we ourselves are thus dealt with.

From the whole therefore it must follow, that a necessity supposed possible, and reconcilable with the constitution of things, does in no sort prove that the Author of Nature will not, nor destroy the proof that he will, finally and upon the whole, in his eternal government, render his creatures happy or miserable, by some means or other, as they behave well or ill. Or, to express this conclusion in words conformable to the title of the chapter, the analogy of Nature shows us, that the opinion of necessity, considered as practical, is

[18] Sermon VIII at the Rolls, [on Resentment. "Why should man dispute concerning the reality of virtue, and whether it be founded on the nature of things (which yet surely is not matter of question), when every man carries about him this passion, which affords him demonstration that the rules of justice and equity are to be the guide of his actions? For every man naturally feels an indignation upon seeing instances of villany and baseness, and, therefore, cannot commit the same without being self-condemned."]

false. And if necessity, upon the supposition above mentioned, doth not destroy the proof of natural religion, it evidently makes no alteration in the proof of revealed.

2 From these things likewise we may learn, in what sense to understand that general assertion, that the opinion of necessity is essentially destructive of all religion. a First, in a practical sense; that by this notion, atheistical men pretend to satisfy and encourage themselves in vice, and justify to others their disregard to all religion. b And secondly, in the strictest sense, that it is a contradiction to the whole constitution of Nature, and to what we may every moment experience in ourselves, and so overturns everything.[19] But by no means is this assertion to be understood, as if necessity, supposing it could possibly be reconciled with the constitution of things and with what we experience, were not also reconcilable with religion: for upon this supposition, it demonstrably is so.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD, CONSIDERED AS A SCHEME OR CONSTITUTION, IMPERFECTLY COMPREHENDED.[1]

[Objections against the *fact* of moral government have been considered. There are others against its moral character: Is it wise and good, and can objections to its wisdom and goodness (founded on the existence of evil) be answered? They may *indirectly*, thus:

A God's moral and natural government are so analogous, that it is credible his moral government is like his natural government,

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[19] [See note [1] of this Chapter. Necessity—in the sense that men act from compulsion—is against Nature and experience: Necessity—in the sense that men's acts are foreseen, and so certain; or even in the sense that men's acts are the results of influences and causes (including natural dispositions and Divine grace)—is not. "Necessity, rightly understood, instead of laying an arrest on the powers and purposes of man, or in any way destroying his spontaneity, leaves him as busy and painstaking a creature as before."—Chalmers' Lect., p. 40.]

[1] [The subject of this chapter is a favourite one with many eminent writers; and Butler himself (Sermon xv.) has stated it at large. Leibnitz has repeatedly enforced the same argument, as has Addison in the 'Spectator.'

an incomprehensible scheme. And this general fact may answer particular objections. Note the fact itself, **1, 2**:

1 God's natural government is an incomprehensible scheme.

a A scheme, 1, with parts and correspondences; 2, relations between different events and actions throughout all space; and, 3, through all time.

b An incomprehensible scheme; so that we can, 1, give no account of things in all their connexions; nor can we, 2, say that anything, however insignificant, is not a necessary condition of something most important.

2 God's moral government is also an incomprehensible scheme;

a A scheme, as appears from

1 The connexion between the two governments;

2 The subservience of the natural to the moral; and,

3 The analogy between the two.

b And so incomprehensible. Hence no objections against parts of this scheme can be insisted upon by reasonable men.

3 Our ignorance (though often overlooked) is a satisfactory answer to objections against the wisdom and goodness of the whole arrangement, as will further appear

a From the weakness of the assertions on which the objections rest: 'in some way (by repeated interpositions, or by making all acts single and unrelated), things might be better:'—which is saying but little; and is, after all, only arbitrary assertion without proof.

b From the nature of our ignorance, which includes the very related parts to which existing works belong. Did we *see* the related parts, our objections might at once cease.

"It is to be considered that Providence, in its economy, regards the whole system of time and things together, so that we cannot discover the beautiful connexions between incidents which be widely separated in time, and, by losing so many links of the chain, our reasonings become broken and imperfect. Thus, those parts of the moral world which have not an absolute may yet have a relative beauty, in respect of some other parts concealed from us, but open to his eye, before whom 'past,' 'present,' and 'to come,' are set together in one point of view; and those events, the permission of which seems now to accuse his goodness, may, in the consummation of things, both magnify his goodness and exalt his wisdom. And this is enough to check our presumption, since it is vain to apply our measures of regularity to matters of which we know neither the antecedents nor the consequents, the beginning nor the end." Spect. No. 237.]

B Some particular analogies between the two governments further show the weakness of these objections.

1 In both, means are connected with ends; and,

a In natural government undesirable means are connected with desirable ends; and so,

b May it be in moral government.

Obj. And though an absurd conclusion is thence derived that evil is better than good, yet this may be answered; for to permit evil may be better than forcibly to prevent it; yet the non-commission of it may be better still, as health is better than disease, and yet some diseases are remedies for others which are worse.

2 In both, government is carried on by general laws.

a God's natural government is; and those laws are wisest, because general, though not preventing (so far as we at present see) great irregularity.

Obj. 1 It may be said that this irregularity might be prevented by direct interposition; but such interposition would have other and bad effects (in promoting negligence, for example).

2 And if it be said that these bad effects might be prevented by further interposition, this is mere random talk.

b So God's moral government may be: the general laws wise and good, but admitting of irregularity, and forbidding interposition.

C Obj. To the whole of this argument. We must judge of God's government from what we know, not from what we do not know. At any rate such answers (founded on ignorance), to objections against God's government are answers to the proofs of it. To which, reply

1 *Total* ignorance precludes both objections and proof; but partial does not. We may know, for example, the character of an agent, and the ends he will pursue, but not the means he will use. So here we have distinct proofs of God's character and of his ends: how best to attain those ends we may not know.

2 Even if our ignorance invalidated the proofs of God's moral government, moral obligations would remain, because

They rise from our nature, which we cannot neglect without self-condemnation; and, as the possibility of moral government is established, prudence leads us to obey them.

° What answers objections against God's moral government—our ignorance—does not invalidate the proofs of that government.

4 The answers above given are founded not upon our ignorance, however, but upon our incompetency through ignorance; a very different thing. Our incompetency is taught by experience, and is really knowledge.

Though it be, as it cannot but be, acknowledged, that the analogy of Nature gives a strong credibility to the general doctrine of religion, and to the several particular things contained in it, considered as so many matters of fact; and likewise that it shows this credibility not to be destroyed by any notions of necessity: yet still, objections may be insisted upon, against the wisdom, equity, and goodness of the Divine government implied in the notion of religion, and against the method by which this government is conducted; to which objections analogy can be no direct answer. For the credibility, or the certain truth, of a matter of fact, does not immediately prove anything concerning the wisdom or goodness of it: and analogy can do no more, immediately or directly, than show such and such things to be true or credible, considered only as matters of fact. But still, if, upon supposition of a moral constitution of Nature and a moral government over it, analogy suggests and makes it credible, that this government must be a scheme, system, or constitution of government, as distinguished from a number of single unconnected acts of distributive justice and goodness; and likewise, that it must be a scheme, so imperfectly comprehended, and of such a sort in other respects, as to afford a direct general answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of it: then analogy is, remotely, of great service in answering those objections, both by suggesting the answer, and showing it to be a credible one. INTR.

Now this, upon inquiry, will be found to be the case. For, first, Upon supposition that God exercises a moral government over the world, the analogy of his natural government suggests and makes it credible, that his moral government must be a scheme, quite beyond our comprehension: and this affords a general answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of it. And, secondly, A more distinct observation of some particular things contained in God's A

B scheme of natural government, the like things being supposed, by analogy, to be contained in his moral government, will further show, how little weight is to be laid upon these objections.

A I. Upon supposition that God exercises a moral government over the world, the analogy of his natural government suggests and makes it credible, that his moral government must be a scheme, quite beyond our comprehension; and this affords a general answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of it. It is most obvious, analogy renders it highly credible, that, upon supposition of a moral government, it must be a scheme: for the world, and the
1 whole natural government of it, appears to be so: to be a
a scheme, system, or constitution, whose parts correspond to
i each other, and to a whole; as really as any work of art, or as any particular model of a civil constitution and government. In this great scheme of the natural world, individuals have various peculiar relations to other individuals of their own species. And whole species are, we find, variously re-
2 lated to other species upon this earth. Nor do we know, how much further these kinds of relations may extend. And, as there is not any action or natural event, which we are acquainted with, so single and unconnected, as not to have a respect to some other actions and events: so possibly each of them, when it has not an immediate, may yet have a remote, natural relation to other actions and events, much beyond the compass of this present world. There seems indeed nothing, from whence we can so much as make a conjecture, whether all creatures, actions, and events, throughout the whole of Nature, have relations to each other. But, as it is
3 obvious, that all events have future unknown consequences; so if we trace any, as far as we can go, into what is connected with it, we shall find, that if such event were not connected with somewhat further in Nature unknown to us, somewhat both past and present, such event could not possibly have
b been at all. Nor can we give the whole account of any one thing whatever; of all its causes, ends, and necessary ad-
1 juncts; those adjuncts, I mean, without which it could not have been. By this most astonishing connexion, these reciprocal correspondences and mutual relations, every thing which we see in the course of Nature is actually brought

about. And things seemingly the most insignificant imaginable are perpetually observed to be necessary conditions to other things of the greatest importance: so that any one thing whatever may, for aught we know to the contrary, be a necessary condition to any other.[2] The natural world then, and natural government of it, being such an incomprehensible scheme; so incomprehensible, that a man must, really in the literal sense, know nothing at all, who is not sensible of his ignorance in it; this immediately suggests, and strongly shows the credibility, that the moral world and government of it may be so too. Indeed the natural and moral constitution and government of the world are so connected, as to make up together but one scheme: and it is highly probable, that the first is formed and carried on merely in subserviency to the latter; as the vegetable world is for the animal, and organized bodies for minds. But the thing intended here is, without inquiring how far the administration of the natural world is subordinate to that of the moral, only to observe the credibility, that one should be analogous or similar to the other: that therefore every act of Divine justice and goodness may be supposed to look much beyond itself, and its immediate object; may have some reference to other parts of God's moral administration, and to a general moral plan; and that every circumstance of this his moral government may be adjusted beforehand with a view to the whole of it. Thus for example: the determined length of time, and the degrees and ways, in which virtue is to remain in a state of warfare and discipline, and in which wickedness is permitted to have its progress; the times appointed for the execution of justice; the appointed instruments of it; the kinds of rewards and punishments, and the manners of their distribution; all particular instances of Divine justice and goodness, and every circumstance of them, may have such respects to each other, as to make up altogether a whole; connected and related in all its parts; a scheme or system, which is as properly one as the natural world is, and of the like kind.

[2] [It is curious to find Butler adopting the very thoughts and phraseology of the Necessitarians. "There is hardly any one action (says Hobbes) how casual soever it seems, to the causing whereof concurs not whatsoever is *in rerum naturâ*."]

And supposing this to be the case, it is most evident, that we are not competent judges of this scheme, from the small parts
b of it which come within our view in the present life: and therefore no objections against any of these parts can be insisted upon by reasonable men.

3 This our ignorance, and the consequence here drawn from it, are universally acknowledged upon other occasions; and though scarce denied, yet are universally forgot, when persons come to argue against religion. And it is not perhaps easy, even for the most reasonable men, always to bear in mind the degree of our ignorance, and make due allowances for it. Upon these accounts, it may not be useless to go on a little further, in order to show more distinctly, how just an answer our ignorance is, to objections against the scheme of Providence. Suppose then a person boldly to assert, that the things complained of, the origin and continuance of evil, might easily have been prevented by repeated interpositions;[3] interpositions so guarded and circumstanced, as would preclude all mischief arising from them; or, if this were impracticable, that a *scheme* of government is itself an imperfection; since more good might have been produced, without any scheme, system, or constitution at all, by continued single unrelated acts of distributive justice and goodness; because these would have occasioned no irregularities. And further than this, it is presumed, the objections will not be carried. Yet the answer is obvious, that were these assertions true, still the observations above, concerning our ignorance in the scheme of Divine government, and the consequence drawn from it, would hold, in great measure, enough to vindicate religion, against all objections from the disorders of the present state. Were these assertions true, yet the government of the world might be just and good notwithstanding; for, at the most, they would infer nothing more than that it might have been better. But indeed they are mere arbitrary assertions, no man being sufficiently acquainted with the possibilities of things, to bring any proof of them to the lowest degree of probability. For however possible what is asserted may seem, yet many instances may be alleged, in things much less out of our reach of suppositions absolutely impossible,

[3] Pp. 137, 138, etc.

and reducible to the most palpable self-contradictions, which not every one by any means would perceive to be such, nor perhaps any one at first sight suspect. From these things, b
it is easy to see distinctly, how our ignorance, as it is the common, is really a satisfactory answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of Providence. If a man, contemplating any one providential dispensation, which had no relation to any others, should object, that he discerned in it a disregard to justice, or a deficiency of goodness; nothing would be less an answer to such objection, than our ignorance in other parts of Providence, or in the possibilities of things, no way related to what he was contemplating. But when we know not but the parts objected against may be relative to other parts unknown to us; and when we are unacquainted with what is, in the nature of the thing practicable in the case before us, then our ignorance is a satisfactory answer; because, some unknown relation, or some unknown impossibility, may render what is objected against, just and good; nay good in the highest practicable degree.

II. And how little weight is to be laid upon such objec- B
tions, will further appear, by a more distinct observation of some particular things contained in the natural government of God, the like to which may be supposed, from analogy, to be contained in his moral government.

First, As in the scheme of the natural world, no ends ap- 1
pear to be accomplished without means; so we find that a
means very undesirable, often conduce to bring about ends in such a measure desirable, as greatly to overbalance the disagreeableness of the means. And in cases where such means are conducive to such ends, it is not reason, but experience, which shows us, that they are thus conducive. Experience also shows many means to be conducive and necessary to accomplish ends, which means before experience, we should have thought, would have had even a contrary tendency. Now from these observations relating to the natural scheme of the world, the moral being supposed analogous to it, arises a great credibility, that the putting our misery in each other's power to the degree it is, and making men liable to vice to the degree we are; and in general, that those things which are objected against the moral scheme of Providence, may be, upon the whole, friendly and assistant

to virtue, and productive of an overbalance of happiness *i. e.*, the things objected against may be means, by which an overbalance of good will, in the end, be found produced. And from the same observations, it appears to be no presumption against this, that we do not, if indeed we do not, see those means to have any such tendency; or that they seem to us to have a contrary one. Thus those things, which we call irregularities, may not be so at all, because they may be means of accomplishing wise and good ends more considerable. And it may be added as above,[4] that they may also be the only means, by which these wise and good ends are capable of being accomplished.

Obj. After these observations it may be proper to add, in order to obviate an absurd and wicked conclusion from any of them, that though the constitution of our nature, from whence we are capable of vice and misery, may, as it undoubtedly does, contribute to the perfection and happiness of the world; and though the actual permission of evil may be beneficial to it: (*i. e.*, it would have been more mischievous, not that a wicked person had himself abstained from his own wickedness, but that any one had forcibly prevented it, than that it was permitted:) yet notwithstanding, it might have been much better for the world, if this very evil had never been done. Nay, it is most clearly conceivable, that the very commission of wickedness may be beneficial to the world, and yet, that it would be infinitely more beneficial for men to refrain from it. For thus, in the wise and good constitution of the natural world, there are disorders which bring their own cures; diseases, which are themselves remedies. Many a man would have died, had it not been for the gout or a fever; yet it would be thought madness to assert, that sickness is a better or more perfect state than health · though the like, with regard to the moral world, has been asserted.[5] But,

[4] Pp. 134, 135.

[5] [By Leibnitz, and even by Edwards.—Essay, § ix.

The reasoning in the early part of this paragraph, though sanctioned by Dr. King, is hardly just: a fever may be better than death, though health is better than either; so the permission of sin is better than the forcible prevention of it, though perfect holiness is better than either. If the question be, why God, having

Secondly, The natural government of the world is carried on by general laws. For this there may be wise and good reasons: the wisest and best, for aught we know to the contrary And that there are such reasons, is suggested to our thoughts by the analogy of Nature: by our being made to experience good ends to be accomplished, as indeed all the good which we enjoy is accomplished by this means, that the laws, by which the world is governed, are general. For we have scarce any kind of enjoyments, but what we are, in some way or other, instrumental in procuring ourselves, by acting in a manner which we foresee likely to procure them: now this foresight could not be at all, were not the government of the world carried on by general laws. And though, for aught we know to the contrary, every single case may be, at length, found to have been provided for even by these: yet to prevent all irregularities, or remedy them as they arise, by the wisest and best general laws, may be impossible in the nature of things; as we see it is absolutely impossible in civil government. But then we are ready to think, that, the constitution of Nature remaining as it is, and the course of things being permitted to go on, in other respects, as it does, there might be interpositions to prevent irregularities, though they could not have been prevented or remedied by any general laws. And there would indeed be reason to wish, which, by the way, is very different from a right to claim, that all irregularities were prevented or remedied by present interpositions, if these interpositions would have no other effect than this. But it is plain they would have some visible and immediate bad effects: for instance, they would encourage idleness and negligence; and they would render doubtful the natural rule of life, which is ascertained by this very thing, that the course of the world is carried on by general laws.

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made man liable to sin, does not forcibly prevent his sinning, the answer here given is pertinent; but the question is really, why man is not created without any inclinations that can lead him to sin, or without external causes which may become favourable to it: a question we cannot answer, except by saying, that the reason is no want on God's part either of holiness or of love. See Whately's Appendix to King's Discourse on Predestination, or Lord Brougham's notes to Paley's Nat. Theol., vol. v. p. 41.]

And further, it is certain they would have distant effects, and very great ones too; by means of the wonderful connexions before mentioned.[6] So that we cannot so much as guess, what would be the whole result of the interpositions desired. It may be said, any bad result might be prevented by further
4 interpositions, whenever there was occasion for them: but this again is talking quite at random, and in the dark.[7] Upon the whole then, we see wise reasons, why the course of the world should be carried on by general laws, and good ends accomplished by this means: and, for aught we know, there may be the wisest reasons for it, and the best ends accomplished by it. We have no ground to believe, that all irregularities could be remedied as they arise, or could have been precluded by general laws. We find that interpositions would produce evil, and prevent good: and, for aught we know, they would produce greater evil than they would prevent; and prevent greater good than they would produce.
5 And if this be the case, then the not interposing is so far from being a ground of complaint, that it is an instance of goodness. This is intelligible and sufficient: and going further, seems beyond the utmost reach of our faculties.

6 **Obj.** But it may be said, that "after all, these supposed impossibilities and relations are what we are unacquainted with; and we must judge of religion, as of other things, by what we do know, and look upon the rest as nothing: or however, that the answers here given to what is objected against religion, may equally be made use of to invalidate the proof of it; since their stress lies so very much upon our ignorance." But,

1 First, though total ignorance in any matter does indeed equally destroy, or rather preclude, all proof concerning it, and objections against it; yet partial ignorance does not. For we may in any degree be convinced, that a person is of such a character, and consequently will pursue such ends; though we are greatly ignorant, what is the proper way of acting, in order the most effectually to obtain those ends: and in this case, objections against his manner of acting, as seemingly not conducive to obtain them, might be answered by our ignorance; though the proof that such ends were intended, might not at all be invalidated by it. Thus, the

[6] P. 132, etc [7] P. 132

proof of religion is a proof of the moral character of God, and consequently that his government is moral, and that every one upon the whole shall receive according to his deserts; a proof that this is the designed end of his government. But we are not competent judges, what is the proper way of acting, in order the most effectually to accomplish this end.[8] Therefore our ignorance is an answer to objections against the conduct of Providence, in permitting irregularities, as seeming contradictory to this end. Now, since it is so obvious, that our ignorance may be a satisfactory answer to objections against a thing, and yet not affect the proof of it; till it can be shown it is frivolous to assert, that our ignorance invalidates the proof of religion, as it does the objections against it.

Secondly, Suppose unknown impossibilities, and unknown 2
relations, might justly be urged to invalidate the proof of religion, as well as to answer objections against it: and that, in consequence of this, the proof of it were doubtful. Yet still, let the assertion be despised, or let it be ridiculed, it is undeniably true, that moral obligations would remain certain though it were not certain what would, upon the whole, be the consequence of observing or violating them. For, these obligations arise immediately and necessarily from the judgment of our own mind, unless perverted, which we cannot violate without being self-condemned. And they would be certain too, from considerations of interest. For though it were doubtful, what will be the future consequences of virtue and vice; yet it is, however, credible, that they may have those consequences, which religion teaches us they will: and this credibility is a certain[9] obligation in point of prudence, to abstain from all wickedness, and to live in the conscientious practice of all that is good. But,

Thirdly, The answers above given to the objections against 3
religion cannot equally be made use of to invalidate the proof of it. For, upon supposition that God exercises a moral government over the world, analogy does most strongly lead us to conclude, that this moral government must be a scheme, or constitution, beyond our comprehension. And a thousand particular analogies show us, that parts of such a scheme, from their relation to other parts, may con-

[8] Pp. 10, 11. [9] P. 6; and Part ii. ch. vi.

duce to accomplish ends, which we should have thought they had no tendency at all to accomplish: nay ends, which, before experience, we should have thought such parts were contradictory to, and had a tendency to prevent. And therefore all these analogies show, that the way of arguing made use of in objecting against religion is delusive: because they show it is not at all incredible, that, could we comprehend the whole, we should find the permission of the disorders objected against to be consistent with justice and goodness; and even to be instances of them. Now this is not applicable to the proof of religion, as it is to the objections against it;[10] and therefore cannot invalidate that proof, as it does these objections.

4 Lastly, From the observation now made, it is easy to see, that the answers above given to the objections against providence, though, in a general way of speaking, they may be said to be taken from our ignorance; yet are by no means taken merely from that, but from somewhat which analogy shows us concerning it. For analogy shows us positively, that our ignorance in the possibilities of things, and the various relations in Nature, renders us incompetent judges, and leads us to false conclusions, in cases similar to this, in which we pretend to judge and to object. So that the things above insisted upon are not mere suppositions of unknown impossibilities and relations, but they are suggested to our thoughts, and even forced upon the observation of serious men, and rendered credible too, by the analogy of Nature. And therefore, to take these things into the account, is to judge by experience and what we do know: and it is not judging so, to take no notice of them.[11]

[10] Serm. at the Rolls, p. 312, 2nd Ed. [Sermon upon the Ignorance of Man.]

[11] [The reader may find a number of "philosophical testimonies to the limitation of our knowledge, from the limitation of our faculties," in Sir W. Hamilton's 'Discussions on Philosophy,' p. 601. "The recognition of human ignorance is not only the one highest, but the one true, knowledge; and its first fruit, as has been said, is humility. Simple nescience is not proud. Consummated science is positively humble. . . . There are two sorts of ignorance: we philosophise to escape ignorance, and the consummation of our philosophy is ignorance: we start from the one, we repose in the other." . . . .]

CONCLUSION.

e observations of the last chapter lead us to consider this le scene of human life in which we are so busily engaged, having a reference of some sort or other to a much larger n of things. Whether we are any way related to the re distant parts of the boundless universe, into which we brought, is altogether uncertain. But it is evident, that course of things which comes within our view, is con- ted with somewhat past, present, and future, beyond it.[1] that we are placed, as one may speak, in the middle of a eme, not a fixed but a progressive one, every way incom- hensible; incomprehensible in a manner equally with pect to what has been, what now is, and what shall be reafter. And this scheme cannot but contain in it some- at as wonderful, and as much beyond our thought and nception[2] as anything in that of religion. For, will any man his senses say, that it is less difficult to conceive how the rld came to be and to continue as it is, without than with intelligent Author and Governor of it? or admitting an elligent Governor of it, that there is some other rule of vernment more natural, and of easier conception than that ich we call moral? Indeed, without an intelligent Author d Governor of Nature, no account at all can be given, how is universe, or the part of it particularly in which we are ncerned, came to be, and the course of it to be carried on, it is; nor any of its general end and design without a oral Governor of it. That there is an intelligent Author Nature and natural Governor of the world, is a principle ne upon in the foregoing treatise, as proved and generally own and confessed to be proved. And the very notion of intelligent Author of Nature, proved by particular final uses, implies a will and a character. Now, as our whole ture, the nature which he has given us, leads us to con- ude his will and character to be moral, just, and good; we can scarce in imagination conceive what it can be

[1] P. 132, etc. [2] See Part ii. chap. ii.

otherwise. However, in consequence of this his will and character, whatever it be, he formed the universe as it is, and carries on the course of it as he does, rather than in any other manner, and has assigned to us and to all living creatures a part and a lot in it. Irrational creatures act this their part, and enjoy and undergo the pleasures and the pains allotted them without any reflection. But one would think it impossible that creatures endued with reason could avoid reflecting sometimes upon all this; reflecting, if not from whence we came, yet at least whither we are going, and what the mysterious scheme, in the midst of which we find ourselves, will at length come out and produce; a scheme in which it is certain we are highly interested, and in which we may be interested even beyond conception. For many things prove it palpably absurd to conclude that we shall cease to be at death. Particular analogies do most sensibly show us that there is nothing to be thought strange in our being to exist in another state of life. And that we are now living beings affords a strong probability that we shall *continue* so; unless there be some positive ground, and there is none from reason or analogy, to think death will destroy us. Were a persuasion of this kind ever so well grounded, there would surely be little reason to take pleasure in it. But indeed it can have no other ground, than some such imagination as that of our gross bodies being ourselves, which is contrary to experience. Experience too most clearly shows us the folly of concluding from the body and the living agent affecting each other mutually, that the dissolution of the former is the destruction of the latter. And there are remarkable instances of their not affecting each other, which lead us to a contrary conclusion. The supposition then, which in all reason we are to go upon, is that our living nature will *continue* after death. And it is infinitely unreasonable to form an institution of life, or to act upon any other supposition. Now all expectation of immortality, whether more or less certain, opens an unbounded prospect to our hopes and our fears; since we see the constitution of Nature is such as to admit of misery, as well as to be productive of happiness, and experience ourselves to partake of both in some degree; and since we cannot but know, what higher degrees of both we are capable

of. And there is no presumption against believing further, Chap 2 that our future interest depends upon our present behaviour; for we see our present interest doth, and that the happiness and misery, which are naturally annexed to our actions, very frequently do not follow till long after the actions are done, to which they are respectively annexed. So that were speculation to leave us uncertain, whether it were likely that the Author of Nature, in giving happiness and misery to his creatures hath regard to their actions or not; yet since we find by experience that he hath such regard, the whole sense of things which he has given us plainly leads us at once and without any elaborate inquiries, to think that it may, indeed must, be to good actions chiefly that he hath annexed happiness and to bad actions misery; or that he will upon the whole, reward those who do well and punish those who do evil. To confirm this from the constitution of the world, it Chap 3 has been observed that some sort of moral government is necessarily implied in that natural government of God, which we experience ourselves under; that good and bad actions at present are naturally rewarded and punished, not only as beneficial and mischievous to society, but also as virtuous and vicious; and that there is in the very nature of the thing a tendency to their being rewarded and punished in a much higher degree than they are at present. And though this higher degree of distributive justice, which nature thus points out and leads towards, is prevented for a time from taking place; it is by obstacles which the state of this world unhappily throws in its way, and which therefore are in their nature temporary. Now as these things in the natural conduct of Providence are observable on the side of virtue, so there is nothing to be set against them on the side of vice. A moral scheme of government then is visibly established, and in some degree carried into execution; and this, together with the essential tendencies of virtue and vice duly considered, naturally raise in us an apprehension that it will be carried on farther towards perfection in a future state, and that every one shall there receive according to his deserts. And if this be so, then our future and general Chap 4 interest, under the moral government of God, is appointed to depend upon our behaviour, notwithstanding the difficulty which this may occasion of securing it and the

danger of losing it; just in the same manner as our temporal interest under his natural government is appointed to depend upon our behaviour, notwithstanding the like difficulty and danger. For, from our original constitution and that of the world which we inhabit, we are naturally trusted with ourselves, with our own conduct and our own interest. And from the same constitution of nature, especially joined with that course of things which is owing to men, we have temptations to be unfaithful in this trust; to forfeit this interest, to neglect it, and run ourselves into misery and ruin. From these temptations arise the difficulties of behaving so as to secure our temporal interest, and the hazard of behaving so as to miscarry in it. There is, therefore, nothing incredible in supposing there may be the like difficulty and hazard with regard to that chief and final good which religion lays before us. Indeed the whole account, how it came to pass that we were placed in such a condition as this, must be beyond our comprehension. But it is in part accounted for by what religion teaches us, that the character of virtue and piety must be a necessary qualification for a future state of security and happiness under the moral government of God; in like manner, as some certain qualifications or other are necessary for every particular condition of life under his natural
Chap. 5. government; and that the present state was intended to be a school of discipline, for improving in ourselves that character. Now this intention of nature is rendered highly credible by observing, that we are plainly made for improvement of all kinds; that it is a general appointment of Providence, that we cultivate practical principles, and form within ourselves habits of action, in order to become fit for what we were wholly unfit for before; that in particular, childhood and youth is naturally appointed to be a state of
Chap. 6. discipline for mature age; and that the present world is peculiarly fitted for a state of moral discipline. And whereas objections are urged against the whole notion of moral government and a probation-state, from the opinion of necessity; it has been shown that God has given us the evidence, as it were, of experience, that all objections
Chap. 7. against religion on this head are vain and delusive. He has also in his natural government, suggested an answer to all

our shortsighted objections against the equity and goodness of his moral government; and in general he has exemplified to us the latter by the former.

These things, which, it is to be remembered, are matters of fact, ought, in all common sense, to awaken mankind; to induce them to consider in earnest their condition, and what they have to do. It is absurd, absurd to the degree of being ridiculous, if the subject were not of so serious a kind, for men to think themselves secure in a vicious life, or even in that immoral thoughtlessness which far the greater part of them are fallen into. And the credibility of religion, arising from experience and facts here considered, is fully sufficient in reason to engage them to live in the general practice of all virtue and piety; under the serious apprehension, though it should be mixed with some doubt[3] of a righteous administration established in nature, and a future judgment in consequence of it; especially when we consider how very questionable it is, whether anything at all can be gained by vice;[4] how unquestionably little as well as precarious, the pleasures and profits of it are at the best, and how soon they must be parted with at the longest. For, in the deliberations of reason, concerning what we are to pursue and what to avoid, as temptations to anything from mere passion are supposed out of the case; so inducements to vice, from cool expectations of pleasure and interest so small and uncertain and short, are really so insignificant, as in the view of reason, to be almost nothing in themselves; and in comparison with the importance of religion, they quite disappear and are lost. Mere passion indeed may be alleged, though not as a reason, yet as an excuse, for a vicious course of life. And how sorry an excuse it is, will be manifest by observing that we are placed in a condition in which we are unavoidably inured to govern our passions, by being necessitated to govern them; and to lay ourselves under the same kind of restraints, and as great ones too, from temporal regards, as virtue and piety, in the ordinary course of things, require. The plea of ungovernable passion then, on the side of vice, is the poorest of all things, for it is no reason, and but a poor excuse. But

[3] Part ii. chap. vi. [4] P 56

the proper motives to religion are the proper proofs of it, from our moral nature, from the presages of conscience, and our natural apprehension of God under the character of a righteous Governor and Judge; a nature and conscience and apprehension given us by him; and from the confirmation of the dictates of reason, by *life and immortality brought to light by the gospel; and the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*

THE END OF THE FIRST PART

THE ANALOGY OF RELIGION TO THE CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE.

PART II.

OF REVEALED RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

[INTRODUCTION.—To two classes the importance of a revelation is not obvious.

a Some *reject* it as incredible or superfluous, and they are answered by the state of the heathen.

b Others neglect it (even when they admit its truth), supposing that it is only the teaching of Nature in another form.

c As a fact, however, God has given it, and it may thence be presumed to be important.

A Christianity may be shown to be important by considering it

1 As a republication of natural religion (God, his government, laws, etc.).

a In its genuine simplicity:

b With authoritativeness—*i. e.*, with new proofs, as miracles and prophecy. These latter *add*

1 To the evidence of natural religion, inasmuch as natural religion is part of revealed, and they confirm both. They also give authoritative or new *proofs*.

2 Though Nature is in a sense a miracle, and so has its own miraculous evidences; yet, practically, the miracles of

Scripture are more authoritative, as is seen in two cases—a teacher working miracles among an ignorant people, and an intelligent inquirer who has learnt all that Nature can teach, and is waiting to have his doubts removed.

c With *new light*, especially on a future state, repentance, etc.,

d With a *visible church*, having positive institutes and public worship; the first,

1 As a form ever reminding men of the reality; and the second,

2 Instructing and reproving them; both tending to perpetuate and diffuse the truth, as may be seen

3 If we compare the state of the world *before* and *since* revelation was given. It may indeed be said,

4 That Christianity in this visible church has been perverted and uninfluential, and so is unimportant. But answer,

(a) Such reasoning sets aside all religion, for natural religion has also been perverted; and

(b) The good effects of Christianity are not small, while its bad effects are not effects of *it* at all.

(c) These effects, moreover, are exaggerated, or are charged to Christianity as a pretence; and

(d) In all dispensations we must judge them by their tendencies if men did their part, and not by their perversion.

e With *express* commands to all Christians to preserve and transmit it.

2 As a revelation of a distinct dispensation; with new truths and duties.

a New truths: redemption by the Son and Spirit; and

b New duties to the Son and the Spirit; which duties spring from our relations to each, as our duty to God springs from our relation to Him; more particularly these duties are all internal or external.

1 *Internal: natural* religion referring to the internal acts or states of the heart in relation to God; *revealed*, to internal acts or states in relation to the Son and the Spirit. These duties arise out of our relations; nor is it important *how* we come to know them (by reason or by revelation): and *external*; expressions, that is, of internal states, according to revealed command: whether as to the Father, the Son, or the Spirit. These duties also arise out of relations; and are many of them

2 Moral; *i. e.*—

(a) The obligations we owe the Son are as moral as the

obligation of charity; they spring out of the nature of the case:

(b) While the violation of them has evil consequences, and is as inexcusable in the case of revelation as in the case of reason, a truth applied to the Son and to the Spirit (c) and (d).

CONCLUSION.

B Note two deductions to illustrate the foregoing and prevent mistakes.

1 Mark the distinction between moral and positive in religion.

a In moral duties we see the reason for them; in positive we do *not.*

b Moral duties arise out of the nature of the case (relations), positive from external command.

c *How* we come to know relations and duties is a question that does nothing in deciding what duties are positive and what moral: external obligations due to God and Christ are positive; though the relation of the Father to us is taught by reason, the relation of the Son, by Scripture, etc.

d Positive institutions (though always fixed by external command) are founded either on natural religion or on revealed.

2 Mark, that from this distinction we gather the ground of the preference given in Scripture to moral over positive duties.

a Carefully note, however, that positive duties, as a whole (though not any particular modes), are morally binding; and the two must not be contrasted further than as they differ.

b If they interfere, fulfil the moral, because,

1 The moral has always a reason in its favour, and

2 It is itself an end, while positive duties are only means.

c Popularly speaking, both are commanded, and so both are binding, yet still the moral are also written in our hearts, and so are to be preferred.

d The question, moreover, is settled for us. The moral is decided to have superior claims—

1 By the nature of the case, which tells us that nothing can be acceptable to God without holiness (moral virtue), and,

2 By Scripture, which lays stress ever on the moral, and tells us of our Lord's declarations (Mat. ix. 13, etc.), which are general and decisive.

e Guard, however, against the mistake of supposing that because positive are *less* important than moral duties, there-

fore they are of *no* importance. Positive Divine commands lay us under a moral obligation to obey them.

C Another deduction or inference (afterwards expanded, chap. iii.) is, that as Christianity is not discoverable by reason, its scheme must be sought *in Scripture;* nor is it an objection to any interpretation of Scripture that it discloses a doctrine or a precept, not contrary to reason and natural religion, but above them, that is neither discoverable through their teaching nor made obligatory by their authority.]

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110. Some persons, upon pretence of the sufficiency of the light of Nature,[1] avowedly reject all revelation as, in its very
a notion, incredible, and what must be fictitious. And indeed it is certain no revelation would have been given, had the light of Nature been sufficient in such a sense as to render one not wanting and useless. But no man in seriousness and simplicity of mind can possibly think it so, who considers the state of religion in the heathen world before revelation, and its present state in those places which have borrowed no light from it; particularly the doubtfulness of some of the greatest men concerning things of the utmost importance, as well as the natural inattention and ignorance of mankind in general. It is impossible to say who would have been able to have reasoned out that whole system, which we call natural religion, in its genuine simplicity, clear of superstition; but there is certainly no ground to affirm that the generality could. If they could there is no sort of probability that they would. Admitting there were they would highly want a standing admonition to remind them of it, and inculcate it upon them. And further still, were they as much disposed to attend to religion as the better sort of men are; yet, even upon this supposition, there would be various occasions for supernatural instruction and assistance, and the greatest advantages might be afforded by them. So that to say revelation is a thing superfluous, what there was no need of, and what can be of no service, is, I think, to talk wildly and at random. Nor would it be more extravagant to affirm, that mankind is so

[1] [See especially Tindal, "Christianity as old as Creation." Lond. 1730.]

entirely at ease in the present state, and life so completely happy, that it is a contradiction to suppose our condition capable of being in any respect better.

There are other persons, not to be ranked with these, who seem to be getting into a way of neglecting, and as it were, overlooking revelation as of small importance, provided natural religion be kept to.[2] With little regard either to the evidence of the former, or to the objections against it, and even upon supposition of its truth, "the only design of it," say they, "must be to establish a belief of the moral system of nature, and to enforce the practice of natural piety and virtue. The belief and practice of these things were perhaps much promoted by the first publication of Christianity, but whether they are believed and practised,

[2] [On the value of natural religion there are three distinct views, each important. Leland, in his work "On the Advantage and Necessity of a Christian Revelation," ('the best and most useful English book,' says Bp. Hare, 'I ever read,') has proved, by an extensive collection of authorities, that, on the three great questions—the nature of God, the rule of moral duty, and a future state—ancient philosophers were profoundly wrong. Their conceptions of God were contradictory and often irrational; their systems of morality lamentably defective; their hope of a future life altogether uncertain. The errors thus maintained were in part the results of false philosophy, and in part of practical ungodliness.

In any case, it will be remarked, secondly, that natural religion must be defective, both in its lessons and in its motives. Its *lessons* tell us little of God or of our duties, and nothing of the author of our recovery and holiness. Its *conclusions* are all founded on subtle reasoning or on protracted experience. In the first case, mankind generally fail to understand them; in the second, men learn its laws only after they have acquired the habit of breaking them. Its *motives* are all feeble. Those that are certain are gathered from this life; those that are from a life to come are all contingent: worldly impulses it meets only by worldly impulses, and these last have to contend with what has in the mean time become habitual. This view is ably discussed in Wayland's "Moral Philosophy," bk. i. ch. vii. sec. 6.

A third view remains. Suppose the teaching of natural religion to be, within its own sphere, perfect. It tells us (say) of God, of human duty, of another life, with the utmost distinctness. *Then the brighter the light it sheds, the darker the shadows.* Clearness as to our duty

upon the evidence and motives of nature or of revelation, is no great matter."[3] This way of considering revelation, though it is not the same with the former, yet borders nearly upon it, and very much at length runs up into it, and requires to be particularly considered with regard to the persons who seem to be getting into this way. The consideration of it will likewise further show the extravagance of the former opinion, and the truth of the observations in answer to it just mentioned. And an inquiry into the importance of Christianity, cannot be an improper introduction to a treatise concerning the credibility of it.

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brings into harsher contrast the darkness of our guilt. The more glorious in duration our destiny, the more terrible our unfitness for it. It was this conviction that stopped many ancient inquirers in the pursuit of truth. They feared their own conclusions, not because they mistrusted the accuracy of them, but because these conclusions seemed to aggravate both their guilt and their misery. It is the excellency of the gospel to reveal clearly the Divine character, human duty, and eternal life, and yet more to show how God can forgive, how duty may, by Divine help, be fulfilled, and the awful future made an object not of dread but of hope. A gospel that only *confirmed* natural religion, could be no glad tidings of great joy to a guilty race. This view is discussed in Chalmers' Nat. Theol. bk. v. ch. iv.; and stated by McCosh, "Method of the Div. Gov." bk. iv.; in striking language by Pascal, "Thoughts," p. 137, Pearce's ed.; and in "The Restoration of Belief," p. 376.]

[3] Invenis multos——propterea nolle fieri Christianos, quia quasi sufficiunt sibi de bonâ vitâ suâ. Bene vivere opus est, ait. Quid mihi præcepturus est Christus? Ut bene vivam? Jam bene vivo. Quid mihi necessarius est Christus? Nullum homicidium, nullum furtum, nullam rapinam facio, res alienas non concupisco, nullo adulterio contaminor. Nam inveniatur in vitâ meâ aliquid quod reprehendatur, et qui reprehenderit faciat Christianum.—*Aug. in Psal.* xxxi.

[You find that many are unwilling to become Christians because they are satisfied with the correctness of their own lives. "A good life is the main thing," says one: "What then will Christ teach me? To live well? My life is already good. How can Christ be necessary to me? Neither homicide, robbery, nor rapine, am I guilty of. I covet no man's possessions. No stain of adultery attaches to me. Let some flaw be first found in my conduct, and then the finder may make me a Christian."]

Now if God has given a revelation to mankind, and commanded those things which are commanded in Christianity, it is evident, at first sight, that it cannot in any wise be an indifferent matter whether we obey or disobey those commands, c
unless we are certainly assured that we know all the reasons for them, and that all those reasons are now ceased with regard to mankind in general, or to ourselves in particular. And it is absolutely impossible we can be assured of this; for our ignorance of these reasons proves nothing in the case, since the whole analogy of nature shows, what is indeed in itself evident, that there may be infinite reasons for things with which we are not acquainted.

But the importance of Christianity will more distinctly A
appear by considering it more distinctly; first, as a republication and external institution of natural or essential religion, adapted to the present circumstances of mankind, and intended to promote natural piety and virtue; and secondly, as containing an account of a dispensation of things not discoverable by reason, in consequence of which, several distinct precepts are enjoined us. For though natural religion is the foundation and principal part of Christianity, it is not in any sense the whole of it.

I. Christianity is the republication of natural religion. It 1
instructs mankind in the moral system of the world; that it is the work of an infinitely perfect Being, and under his government; that virtue is his law; and that he will finally judge mankind in righteousness, and render to all according to their works in a future state. And, which is very material, it teaches natural religion in its genuine simplicity; a
free from those superstitions with which it is totally corrupted, and under which it was in a manner lost.

Revelation is further an authoritative publication of natu- b
ral religion, and so affords the evidence of testimony for the truth of it. Indeed the miracles and prophecies recorded in Scripture were intended to prove a particular dispensation of Providence, the redemption of the world by the Messiah; but this does not hinder, but that they may also prove God's general providence over the world as our moral Governor and Judge. And they evidently do prove it; because this 1
character of the Author of Nature is necessarily connected

with, and implied in, that particular revealed dispensation of things; it is likewise continually taught expressly, and insisted upon, by those persons who wrought the miracles and delivered the prophecies. So that indeed natural religion seems as much proved by the Scripture revelation, as it would have been, had the design of revelation been nothing else than to prove it.

But it may possibly be disputed how far miracles can prove natural religion, and notable objections may be urged against this proof of it, considered as a matter of speculation;[4] but considered as a practical thing there can be none. For suppose a person to teach natural religion to a nation, who had lived in total ignorance or forgetfulness of it, and to declare he was commissioned by God so to do; suppose him, in proof of his commission, to foretell things future, which no human foresight could have guessed at; to divide the sea with a word; feed great multitudes with bread from heaven; cure all manner of diseases; and raise the dead, even himself, to life; would not this give additional credibility to his teaching, a credibility beyond what that of a common man would have, and be an authoritative publication of the law of Nature, *i. e.*, a new proof of it? It would be a practical one of the strongest kind perhaps which human creatures are capable of having given them. The law of Moses then, and the gospel of Christ, are authoritative publications of the religion of Nature; they afford a proof of God's general providence as moral Governor of the world, as well as of his particular dispensations of providence towards sinful creatures revealed in the law and the gospel. As they are the only evidence of the latter so they are an additional evidence of the former.

[4] [The speculative difficulties to which Butler here refers are of two kinds:—Are miracles of themselves decisive proofs of the truth of a religious system; or need we to compare the miracles with the general morality of the system they are intended to support? And, further, can miracles prove natural religion, on the supposition that natural phenomena have failed to prove it—to prove it, that is, to the satisfaction of an inquirer? Without discussing either question, Butler shows that, to particular persons, and in particular stages of religious inquiry, miracles are practically an authoritative evidence of natural religion which is incorporated in the revealed.]

To show this further, let us suppose a man of the greatest and most improved capacity, who had never heard of revelation, convinced upon the whole, notwithstanding the disorders of the world, that it was under the direction and moral government of an infinitely perfect Being, but ready to question whether he were not got beyond the reach of his faculties; suppose him brought by this suspicion into great danger of being carried away by the universal bad example of almost every one around him, who appeared to have no sense, no practical sense at least, of these things; and this, perhaps, would be as advantageous a situation with regard to religion, as nature alone ever placed any man in. What a confirmation now must it be to such a person, all at once to find that this moral system of things was revealed to mankind, in the name of that infinite Being, whom he had from principles of reason believed in; and that the publishers of the revelation proved their commission from him, by making it appear that he had entrusted them with a power of suspending and changing the general laws of Nature!

Nor must it by any means be omitted, for it is a thing of the utmost importance, that life and immortality are eminently brought to light by the gospel. The great doctrines of a future state, the danger of a course of wickedness, and the efficacy of repentance,[a] are not only confirmed in the
gospel, but are taught, especially the last is, with a degree c
of light, to which that of nature is but darkness.

Further: As Christianity served these ends and purposes, when it was first published, by the miraculous publication itself, so it was intended to serve the same purposes in
future ages, by means of the settlement of a visible church, d
of a society, distinguished from common ones and from the rest of the world by peculiar religious institutions, by an instituted method of instruction, and an instituted form of external religion. Miraculous powers were given to the first preachers of Christianity, in order to their introducing it into the world; a visible church was established in order

[a] [' The efficacy of repentance,' rather the connexion of repentance with pardon. Repentance is essential to pardon, but is in no sense the efficacious influence that secures it, or the ground on which it rests. See Butler's own statement in chap. v. p. 214, and note.]

to continue it, and carry it on successively throughou
ages. Had Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apo
only taught, and by miracles proved, religion to their
temporaries, the benefits of their instructions would
reached but to a small part of mankind. Christianity
have been in a great degree sunk and forgotten in a ver
ages. To prevent this appears to have been one reason
a visible church was instituted; to be, like a city up
hill, a standing memorial to the world of the duty whic
owe our Maker; to call men continually, both by exa
and instruction, to attend to it, and, by the form of reli
ever before their eyes, remind them of the reality; to b
repository of the oracles of God; to hold up the ligh
revelation in aid to that of Nature, and propagat
throughout all generations to the end of the world—
light of revelation, considered here in no other view tha
designed to enforce natural religion. And in proportio
Christianity is professed and taught in the world, relig
natural or essential religion, is thus distinctly and ad
tageously laid before mankind, and brought again and a
to their thoughts as a matter of infinite importance.
visible church has also a further tendency to promote n
ral religion, as being an instituted method of educa
originally intended to be of more peculiar advantage
those who would conform to it. For one end of the insti
tion was, that by admonition and reproof, as well as inst
tion, by a general regular discipline and public exercise
religion, *the body of Christ*, as the Scripture speaks, sh
be *edified*, i. e., trained up in piety and virtue for a hig
and better state. This settlement then appearing thus be
ficial; tending in the nature of the thing to answer, an
some degree actually answering, those ends; it is to
remembered that the very notion of it implies positive
stitutions, for the visibility of the church consists in th
Take away every thing of this kind, and you lose the v
notion itself. So that if the things now mentioned are
vantages, the reason and importance of positive instituti
in general is most obvious; since without them these
vantages could not be secured to the world. And it is m
idle wantonness to insist upon knowing the reasons w
such particular ones were fixed upon rather than others.

The benefit arising from this supernatural assistance, which Christianity affords to natural religion, is what some persons are very slow in apprehending. And yet it is a thing distinct in itself, and a very plain obvious one. For will any in good earnest really say that the bulk of mankind in
the heathen world were in as advantageous a situation with 3
regard to natural religion, as they are now amongst us; that it was laid before them, and enforced upon them, in a manner as distinct and as much tending to influence their practice? [a]

The objections against all this, from the perversion of 4
Christianity and from the supposition of its having had but little good influence, however innocently they may be proposed, yet cannot be insisted upon as conclusive, upon any
principles but such as lead to downright Atheism; because (a)
the manifestation of the law of nature by reason, which, upon all principles of Theism must have been from God, has been perverted and rendered ineffectual in the same manner.
It may indeed, I think, truly be said, that the good effects (b)
of Christianity have not been small, nor its supposed ill effects any effects at all of it, properly speaking. Perhaps too the things themselves done have been aggravated; and
if not, Christianity hath been often only a pretence, and the (c)
same evils in the main would have been done upon some other pretence. However great and shocking as the corruptions and abuses of it have really been, they cannot be insisted upon as arguments against it upon principles of Theism. For one cannot proceed one step in reasoning upon natural religion, any more than upon Christianity, without laying it down as a first principle, that the dispensations of Providence are not to be judged of by their per-
versions, but by their genuine tendencies; not by what they (d)
do actually seem to effect but by what they would effect if mankind did their part; that part which is justly put and left upon them. It is altogether as much the language of

[a] ["Even under the most favourable circumstances the human mind has never, when unassisted by revelation, deduced from the course of things around us any such principles of duty or motives to the performance of it as were sufficient to produce any decided effect upon the moral character of man."—Wayland, as above. See also Lowth's "Directions on the Reading of the Scriptures," chap. x.; and Locke's "Reasonableness of Christianity," p. 113, ed. 1815.]

one as of the other; *He that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he that is holy let him be holy still.*[7] The light of reason does not, any more than that of revelation, force men to submit to its authority; both admonish them of what they ought to do and avoid, together with the consequences of each, and after this leave them at full liberty to act just as they please, till the appointed time of judgment. Every moment's experience shows that this is God's general rule of government.

To return then: Christianity being a promulgation of the law of Nature, being moreover an authoritative promulgation of it, with new light and other circumstances of peculiar advantage, adapted to the wants of mankind; these things
3 fully show its importance. And it is to be observed further, that as the nature of the case requires, so all Christians are commanded to contribute by their profession of Christianity to preserve it in the world, and render it such a promulgation and enforcement of religion. For it is the very scheme of the gospel, that each Christian should in his degree contribute towards continuing and carrying it on; all by uniting in the public profession and external practice of Christianity; some by instructing, by having the oversight and taking care of this religious community, the Church of God. Now this further shows the importance of Christianity, and, which is what I chiefly intend, its importance in a practical sense; or the high obligations we are under to take it into our most serious consideration, and the danger there must necessarily be, not only in treating it despitefully, which I am not now speaking of, but in disregarding and neglecting it. For this is neglecting to do what is expressly enjoined us, for continuing those benefits to the world, and transmitting them down to future times. And all this holds, even though the only thing to be considered in Christianity, were its subserviency to natural religion. But,

II. Christianity is to be considered in a further view, as containing an account of a dispensation of things not at all discoverable by reason, in consequence of which several distinct precepts are enjoined us. Christianity is not only an external institution of natural religion, and a new promulgation of God's general providence as righteous Governor

[7] Rev. xxii. 11.

and Judge of the world, but it contains also a revelation of a particular dispensation of Providence, carrying on by his Son and Spirit for the recovery and salvation of mankind, who are represented in Scripture to be in a state of ruin. And in consequence of this revelation being made, we are commanded *to be baptized*, not only *in the name of the Father*, but also *of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:* and other obligations of duty, unknown before, to the Son and the Holy Ghost are revealed. Now the importance of these duties may be judged of by observing that they arise, not from positive command merely, but also from the offices which appear from Scripture to belong to those Divine persons in the gospel dispensation, or from the relations which we are there informed they stand in to us. By reason is revealed the relation which God the Father stands in to us. Hence arises the obligation of duty which we are under to him. In Scripture are revealed the relations which the Son and Holy Spirit stand in to us. Hence arise the obligations of duty which we are under to them. The truth of the case, as one may speak, in each of these three respects being admitted, that God is the governor of the world, upon the evidence of reason; that Christ is the mediator between God and man, and the Holy Ghost our guide and sanctifier, upon the evidence of revelation; the truth of the case, I say, in each of these respects being admitted, it is no more a question why it should be commanded that we be baptized in the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, than that we be baptized in the name of the Father. This matter seems to require to be more fully stated.[8]

[8] See the Nature, Obligation, and Efficacy of the Christian Sacraments, etc.; and Colliber on Revealed Religion, as there quoted [by Dr. Waterland. See V. Mildert's ed. of his works, vol. v. p. 439. A distinction frequently noticed (see Chalmers' Nat. Theol. book v. chap. iv.) may make the text clearer. The ethics of natural religion, it is remarked, is one thing; the objects (or facts) of natural religion another. Natural religion tells us nothing of a Redeemer or a Sanctifier; but when once a Redeemer and Sanctifier are revealed, even natural religion tells us with what feelings we ought to regard them. Love and obedience to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, are moral duties, and spring out of the very relations we sustain to them—immediately those relations

Let it be remembered then that religion comes under the twofold consideration of internal and external; for the latter is as real a part of religion, of true religion, as the former. Now when religion is considered under the first notion, as an inward principle to be exerted in such and such inward acts of the mind and heart, the essence of natural religion may be said to consist in religious regards to *God the Father Almighty*; and the essence of revealed religion, as distinguished from natural, to consist in religious regards to *the Son*, and to *the Holy Ghost*. And the obligation we are under of paying these religious regards to each of these Divine persons respectively, arises from the respective relations which they each stand in to us. How these relations are made known, whether by reason or revelation, makes no alteration in the case; because the duties arise out of the relations themselves, not out of the manner in which we are informed of them. The Son and Spirit have each his proper office in that great dispensation of Providence, the redemption of the world; the one our mediator, the other our sanctifier. Does not then the duty of religious regards to both these Divine persons, as immediately arise, to the view of reason, out of the very nature of these offices and relations; as the inward good-will and kind intention, which we owe to our fellow-creatures, arises out of the common relations between us and them? But it will be asked, "What are the inward religious regards appearing thus obviously due to the Son and Holy Spirit; as arising, not merely from command in Scripture, but from the very nature of the revealed relations which they stand in to us?" I answer, the religious regards of reverence, honour, love, trust, gratitude, fear, hope. In what external manner this inward worship is to be expressed is a matter of pure revealed command; as perhaps the external manner in which God the Father is to be worshipped may be more so than we are ready to think; but the worship, the internal worship itself, to the Son and Holy Ghost, is no further matter of pure revealed command than as the

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are known. How this love and obedience are to be expressed, so as to be most acceptable, are, as Butler notes, matters of revealed command.]

relations they stand in to us are matter of pure revelation; for the relations being known, the obligations to such internal worship are obligations of reason, arising out of those relations themselves. In short, the history of the gospel as immediately shows us the reason of these obligations, as it shows us the meaning of the words Son and Holy Ghost.

If this account of the Christian religion be just, those persons who can speak lightly of it, as of little consequence provided natural religion be kept to, plainly forget that Christianity, even what is peculiarly so called, as distinguished from natural religion, has yet somewhat very important, even of a moral nature. For the office of our Lord being made known, and the relation he stands in to us, the obligation of religious regards to him is plainly moral, as much as charity to mankind is; since this obligation arises, before external command, immediately out of that his office and relation itself. Those persons appear to forget that revelation is to be considered, as informing us of somewhat new in the state of mankind and in the government of the world; as acquainting us with some relations we stand in which could not otherwise have been known. And these relations being real, though before revelation we could be under no obligations from them, yet upon their being revealed there is no reason to think but that neglect of behaving suitably to them will be attended with the same kind of consequences under God's government, as neglecting to behave suitably to any other revelations made known to us by reason. And ignorance, whether unavoidable or voluntary, so far as we can possibly see, will just as much, and just as little, excuse in one case as in the other; the ignorance being supposed equally unavoidable, or equally voluntary, in both cases.

If therefore Christ be indeed the mediator between God and man, *i. e.*, if Christianity be true, if he be indeed our Lord, our Saviour, and our God; no one can say what may follow, not only the obstinate but the careless disregard to him in those high relations. Nay no one can say, what may follow such disregard even in the way of natural consequence.* For, as the natural consequences of vice in this life are

* P. 82. 83.

dissolution, to be considered as judicial punishments inflicted by God; so likewise, for aught we know, the judicial punishments of the future life may be, in a like way or a like sense, the natural consequence of vice;[10] of men's violating or disregarding the relations which God has placed them in here, and made known to them.

Again: If mankind are corrupted and depraved in their moral character, and so are unfit for that state which Christ is gone to prepare for his disciples; and if the assistance of God's Spirit be necessary to renew their nature in the degree requisite to their being qualified for that state; all which is implied in the express, though figurative declaration, *Except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God:*[11] supposing this, is it possible any serious person can think it a slight matter whether or no he makes use of the means, expressly commanded by God, for obtaining this Divine assistance? especially since the whole analogy of Nature shows that we are not to expect any benefits without making use of the appointed means for obtaining or enjoying them. Now reason shows us nothing of the particular immediate means of obtaining either temporal or spiritual benefits. This therefore we must learn, either from experience or revelation. And experience the present case does not admit of.

Conclus. The conclusion from all this evidently is, that, Christianity being supposed either true or credible, it is unspeakable irreverence, and really the most presumptuous rashness, to treat it as a light matter. It can never justly be esteemed of little consequence till it be positively supposed false. Nor do I know a higher and more important obligation which we are under than that of examining most seriously into the evidence of it, supposing its credibility, and of embracing it upon supposition of its truth.

II The two following deductions may be proper to be added, in order to illustrate the foregoing observations, and to prevent their being mistaken.

I First, Hence we may clearly see where lies the distinction between what is positive and what is moral in religion. Moral *precepts* are precepts, the reasons of which we see; positive *precepts* are precepts the reasons of which we do not

[10] Chap. v. [11] John iii. 5.

sec.[12] Moral *duties* arise out of the nature of the case itself, b
prior to external command. Positive *duties* do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command; nor would they be duties at all were it not for such command, received from him whose creatures and subjects we are. But the manner in which the nature of the case, or the fact c
of the relation, is made known, this doth not denominate any duty either positive or moral. That we be baptized in the name of the Father, is as much a positive duty as that we be baptized in the name of the Son; because both arise equally from revealed command, though the relation which we stand in to God the Father is made known to us by reason; the relation we stand in to Christ by revelation only. On the other hand, the dispensation of the gospel admitted, gratitude as immediately comes due to Christ, from his being the voluntary minister of this dispensation, as it is due to God the Father, from his being the fountain of all good; though the first is made known to us by revelation only, the second by reason. Hence also we may see, d
and, for distinctness' sake, it may be worth mentioning, that positive institutions come under a twofold consideration. They are either institutions founded on natural religion, as baptism in the name of the Father; though this has also a particular reference to the gospel dispensation, for it is in the name of God, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;

[12] This is the distinction between moral and positive precepts considered respectively as such. But yet, since the latter have somewhat of a moral nature, we may see the reason of them, considered in this view. Moral and positive precepts are, in some respects, alike, in other respects different. So far as they are like we discern the reasons of both; so far as they are different, we discern the reasons of the former, but not of the latter. See p. 161, &c., and p. 172. [Though the language of the text, as modified by Butler's note, is substantially accurate, it is important to add, that positive precepts have often a ground or reason visible to us, though that reason does not by itself make the thing enjoined a moral duty. Bp. Taylor's definition may be advantageously compared with Butler's: 'Moral precepts,' says he, 'have their measure in natural reason, while in positive precepts the reasons and measure are incidental, economical, or political.' The reason of the first is eternal, the reason of the second temporary.

or they are external institutions founded on revealed religion, as baptism in the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, From the distinction between what is moral and what is positive in religion, appears the ground of that peculiar preference which the Scripture teaches us to be due to the former.

The reason of positive institutions in general is very obvious; though we should not see the reason why such particular ones are pitched upon rather than others. Whoever therefore, instead of cavilling at words, will attend to the thing itself, may clearly see that positive institutions in general, as distinguished from this or that particular one, have the nature of moral commands; since the reasons of them appear. Thus, for instance, the *external* worship of God is a moral duty, though no particular mode of it be so. Care then is to be taken, when a comparison is made between positive and moral duties, that they be compared no further than as they are different; no further than as the former are positive, or arise out of mere external command, the reasons of which we are not acquainted with; and as the latter are moral, or arise out of the apparent reason of the case, without such external command. Unless this caution be observed, we shall run into endless confusion.

Now this being premised, suppose two standing precepts enjoined by the same authority; that, in certain conjunctures, it is impossible to obey both; that the former is moral, *i. e.*, a precept of which we see the reasons, and that they hold in the particular case before us; but that the latter is positive, *i. e.*, a precept of which we do not see the reasons: it is indisputable that our obligations are to obey the former; because there is an apparent reason for this preference, and none against it. Further, positive institutions, I suppose all those which Christianity enjoins, are means to a moral end: and the end must be acknowledged more excellent than the means. Nor is observance of these institutions any religious obedience at all, or of any value, otherwise than as it proceeds from a moral principle. This seems to be the strict logical way of stating and determining this matter; but will, perhaps, be found less applicable to practice, than may be thought at first sight.

And therefore, in a more practical, though more lax way of consideration, and taking the words, *moral law* and *positive* c
institutions in the popular sense; I add, that the whole moral law is as much matter of revealed command, as positive institutions are: for the Scripture enjoins every moral virtue. In this respect then they are both upon a level. But the moral law is, moreover, written upon our hearts; interwoven into our very nature. And this is a plain intimation of the Author of it, which is to be preferred when they interfere.

But there is not altogether so much necessity for the de- d
termination of this question, as some persons seem to think. Nor are we left to reason alone to determine it. For, first, 1
though mankind have, in all ages, been greatly prone to place their religion in peculiar positive rites, by way of equivalent for obedience to moral precepts; yet, without making any comparison at all between them, and consequently without determining which is to have the preference, the nature of the thing abundantly shows all notions of that kind to be utterly subversive of true religion: as they are, moreover, contrary to the whole general tenor of Scripture; and likewise to the most express particular declarations of it, that nothing can render us accepted of God, without moral virtue. Secondly, Upon the occasion of mentioning together positive 2
and moral duties, the Scripture always puts the stress of religion upon the latter, and never upon the former: which, though no sort of allowance to neglect the former, when they do not interfere with the latter, yet it is a plain intimation, that when they do, the latter are to be preferred. And further, as mankind are for placing the stress of their religion anywhere, rather than upon virtue, lest both the reason of the thing, and the general spirit of Christianity, appearing in the intimation now mentioned, should be ineffectual against this prevalent folly: our Lord himself, from whose command alone the obligation of positive institutions arises, has taken occasion to make the comparison between them and moral precepts; when the Pharisees censured him for *eating with publicans and sinners;* and also when they censured his disciples for *plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-day.* Upon this comparison, he has determined expressly, and in form, which shall have the preference when they interfere. And by delivering his authoritative determination

in a proverbial manner of expression, he has made it general: *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.*[13] The propriety of the word *proverbial* is not the thing insisted upon: though I think the manner of speaking is to be called so. But that the manner of speaking very remarkably renders the determination general, is surely indisputable. For, had it, in the latter case, been said only, that God preferred mercy to the rigid observance of the Sabbath; even then, by parity of reason, most justly might we have argued, that he preferred mercy likewise, to the observance of other ritual institutions; and in general, moral duties, to positive ones. And thus the determination would have been general, though its being so were inferred and not expressed. But as the passage really stands in the Gospel, it is much stronger. For the sense and the very literal words of our Lord's answer are as applicable to any other instance of a comparison between positive and moral duties, as to this upon which they were spoken. And if, in case of competition, mercy is to be preferred to positive institutions, it will scarce be thought, that justice is to give place to them. It is remarkable too, that as the words are a quotation from the Old Testament, they are introduced on both the beforementioned occasions, with a declaration, that the Pharisees did not understand the meaning of them. This, I say, is very remarkable. For, since it is scarce possible, for the most ignorant person not to understand the literal sense of the passage in the Prophet;[14] and since understanding the literal sense would not have prevented their *condemning the guiltless*;[15] it can hardly be doubted, that the thing which our Lord really intended in that declaration was, that the Pharisees had not learnt from it, as they might, wherein the *general* spirit of religion consists: that it consists in moral piety and virtue, as distinguished from forms, and ritual observances. However, it is certain we may learn this from his Divine application of the passage in the Gospel.

[13] Matt. ix. 13, and xii. 7. [Obedience to positive command, it will be noticed, is often a more decisive test of religious character than the practice of moral duties. The latter may spring from a principle of natural morality; the former—if not the result of hypocrisy or of mechanical habit—is an evidence of reverence for the Divine will.]

[14] Hosea vi. [15] See Matt. xii. 7.

But, as it is one of the peculiar weaknesses of human nature, when, upon a comparison of two things, one is found to be of greater importance than the other, to consider this other as of scarce any importance at all: it is highly necessary that we remind ourselves, how great presumption it is, to make light of any institutions of Divine appointment; that our obligations to obey all God's commands whatever are absolute and indispensable; and that commands merely positive, admitted to be from him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them: an obligation moral in the strictest and most proper sense.[15]

To these things I cannot forbear adding, that the account now given of Christianity most strongly shows and enforces upon us the obligation of searching the Scriptures, in order to see what the scheme of revelation really is; instead of determining beforehand, from reason, what the scheme of it must be.[16] Indeed if in revelation there be found any passages, the seeming meaning of which is contrary to natural religion;[17] we may most certainly conclude, such seeming meaning not to be the real one. But it is not any degree of a presumption against an interpretation of Scripture, that such interpretation contains a doctrine which the light of Nature cannot discover;[18] or a precept, which the law of Nature does not oblige to.[19]

[15] See Matt. xii. 7. [16] See chap. iii.

[17] [This sentiment, as understood by Butler (who had a profound sense of human ignorance, and of the folly of applying it, to decide questions of theology), is just; but it is very liable to abuse. Clearly, the Bible must be so interpreted as to agree with *all known truth*, whether of natural religion or of general science. At the same time, to correct the theology of the Bible by the theology of nature, as finite and guilty men see and understand it, may involve the rejection of Bible theology entirely, and of the very light and teaching it was intended to supply. The converse of Butler's statement is equally true, and even more important: "If in natural theology there be found any facts, the seeming lesson of which is contrary to revealed religion, such seeming lesson is not the real one." Practically, it will be found that seeming meanings of Scripture, really erroneous, are corrected by other parts of Scripture itself.]

[18] P. 170, 171.

[19] [In reviewing this chapter, too much stress cannot be laid on the principle laid down by Dr. Chalmers. Christianity is not only

CHAPTER II.

OF THE SUPPOSED PRESUMPTION AGAINST A REVELATION, CONSIDERED AS MIRACULOUS.

[Christianity is, as we have seen (Chap. i.), important. Before considering particular objections to it, *revelation in general* is objected to; because, from the very nature of the case, it is above Nature, and so miraculous. The miraculousness of revelation, and miracles generally, will therefore be first considered. Are objections to revelation on this ground well founded?

A The objection lies, not against the particular doctrines of Christianity, but against revelation; and that on one of two grounds; either

1 Because the scheme of religion is not discoverable without revelation (or, see 2). But this is no just objection; because there are in Nature innumerable things not discoverable by our natural faculties, but yet true and real.

2 Or, because revelation, as miraculous, is unlike the known course of Nature. But this is no just objection; because

a It is not probable that everything in the unknown course of Nature, is like something in the known.

b And, even in the known course of Nature, many things are unlike one another.

c The course of Nature is not so unlike revelation as many suppose, and this will hereafter appear.

Whether the above examples include all that is meant by miraculous, may be questioned. But the general idea expressed by the word being clear, note further

B That against revelation as miraculous, or against miracles as proofs of it, there could be no presumption at the beginning of the world; for

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a republication of natural religion, with added truth, but the added truth is adapted to the condition in which natural religion leaves us. "The first without the second"—the republication without the remedial addition—"would have been a message of terror and denunciation. It is the second which reconciles all difficulties; and besides adding the light of its own manifestation, it resolves all the doubts and hushes all the fears which the first had awakened."—*Lectures*, p 50.]

1 A miracle has reference to the course of Nature, and implies something different from it. But at first no course had been established, and so there is no other objection to miracles at that time than to any other fact.

2 Or the argument may be put thus. The power exerted in creation (whether called miraculous or not), was different from what is exerted in the present course of Nature; and, whether that power was exerted so as to give a revelation, is a question that affects the degree, not the kind of power put forth. If this power be called miraculous, then the presumption against the use of such a power to give a revelation, is even less.

3 Add, that from history it seems that religion was not first reasoned out, but revealed—a fact that confirms natural religion, and may remove prejudices against subsequent communications.

C Nor is there any presumption against miracles, or revelation as miraculous, after the course of Nature has been settled; for

1 Generally, we need a second ruined world, from which to take the analogy; and, even from that case (a single one), our proofs would be precarious; and

2 Particularly, though there be presumption against miracles, yet

a As, in common facts, even a small amount of proof in their favour may set aside the presumption against them.

b We know so little upon what the course of Nature depends, that we cannot say miracles are more improbable than many general facts.

c Looking at the religious interests of the race, we see reasons for them.

d Comparing them, as we ought, with extraordinary events (as comets, earthquakes), the presumption against them seems almost as unfounded as the presumption against those events.

D Hence conclude

1 That there is no such presumption against miracles as renders them incredible.

2 That, on the contrary, as there are reasons for them, there is a presumption in their favour; and

3 That, as compared with the extraordinary facts of Nature, there is no peculiar presumption against them at all.

Having shown the importance of the Christian revelation, and the obligations which we are under seriously to attend to it, upon supposition of its truth or its credibility; the next thing in order is to consider the supposed presumptions against revelation in general, which shall be the subject of this chapter; and the objections against the Christian in particular, which shall be the subject of some following ones.[1] For it seems the most natural method to remove these prejudices against Christianity, before we proceed to the consideration of the positive evidence for it, and the objections against that evidence.[2]

It is, I think, commonly supposed that there is some peculiar presumption, from the analogy of Nature, against the Christian scheme of things, at least against miracles; so as that stronger evidence is necessary to prove the truth and reality of them, than would be sufficient to convince us of other events, or matters of fact. Indeed the consideration of this supposed presumption cannot but be thought very insignificant by many persons. Yet, as it belongs to the subject of this treatise, so it may tend to open the mind and remove some prejudices; however needless the consideration of it be upon its own account.

I. I find no appearance of a presumption, from the analogy of Nature, against the general scheme of Christianity, that God created and invisibly governs the world by Jesus Christ; and by Him also will hereafter judge it in righteousness, *i.e.* render to every one according to his works, and that good men are under the secret influence of his Spirit. Whether these things are, or are not, to be called miraculous, is perhaps only a question about words;[3] or, however, is of no

[1] Ch. iii. iv. v. vi. [2] Ch. vii.

[3] [It must be noted, that in Butler's view a revelation is necessarily miraculous—that is, it is something not discovered by reason or experience, and it is more or less unlike the course of Nature. There may be also what is called miraculous evidence in proof of the revelation so given; but, independently of such evidence, a revelation is itself supernatural. If this view be admitted, the number of miracles used to illustrate and enforce it, to which objection is often taken, is a subordinate question that need raise no difficulty.

Hence, a denial of miraculous evidence leads to a denial of the possibility of a revelation, itself a miracle (see 'Eclipse of Faith')

moment in the case. If the analogy of Nature raises any presumption against this general scheme of Christianity, it must be either because it is not discoverable by reason or experience, or else because it is unlike that course of Nature which is. But analogy raises no presumption against the truth of this scheme upon either of these accounts.

First, there is no presumption from analogy, against the 1
truth of it, upon account of its not being discoverable by reason or experience. For suppose one who never heard of revelation, of the most improved understanding, and acquainted with our whole system of natural philosophy and natural religion; such an one could not but be sensible, that it was but a very small part of the natural and moral system of the universe which he was acquainted with. He could not but be sensible that there must be innumerable things, in the dispensations of Providence past, in the invisible government over the world at present carrying on, and in what is to come, of which he was wholly ignorant,[4] and which could not be discovered without revelation. Whether the scheme of Nature be, in the strictest sense, infinite or not, it is evidently vast even beyond all possible imagination. And doubtless that part of it, which is opened to our view, is but as a point, in comparison of the whole plan of Providence, reaching throughout eternity past and future; in comparison of what is even now going on in the remote parts of the boundless universe, nay in comparison of the whole scheme of this world. And, therefore, that things lie beyond the natural reach of our faculties is no sort of presumption against the truth and reality of them; because it is certain there are innumerable things, in the constitution and government of the universe, which are thus beyond the natural
reach of our faculties. Secondly, analogy raises no pre- 2
sumption against any of the things contained in this general doctrine of Scripture now mentioned, upon account of their being unlike the known course of Nature. For there is no presumption at all from analogy, that the *whole* course of

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and even (as Paley has shown) to a denial of the existence of God, all of whose extraordinary acts are necessarily miraculous.]

[4] P. 133.

things, or Divine government, naturally unknown to us, and *everything* in it, is like to anything in that which is known; and therefore no peculiar presumption against anything in the former, upon account of its being unlike to anything in the latter. And in the constitution and natural government of the world, as well as in the moral government of it, we see things, in a great degree, unlike one another; and therefore ought not to wonder at such unlikeness between things visible and invisible. However, the scheme of Christianity is by no means entirely unlike the scheme of Nature, as will appear in the following part of this treatise.

The notion of a miracle, considered as a proof of a Divine mission, has been stated with great exactness by divines, and is, I think, sufficiently understood by every one. There are also invisible miracles, the incarnation of Christ, for instance, which, being secret, cannot be alleged as a proof of such a mission, but require themselves to be proved by visible miracles. Revelation itself too is miraculous, and miracles are the proof of it; and the supposed presumption against these shall presently be considered. All which I have been observing here is, that whether we choose to call everything in the dispensations of Providence, not discoverable without revelation, nor like the known course of things, miraculous; and whether the general Christian dispensation now mentioned is to be called so or not, the foregoing observations seem certainly to show that there is no presumption against it from the analogy of Nature.

II. There is no presumption, from analogy, against some operations which we should now call miraculous, particularly none against a revelation at the beginning of the world; nothing of such presumption against it, as is supposed to be implied or expressed in the word *miraculous*. For a miracle, in its very notion, is relative to a course of Nature, and implies somewhat different from it, considered as being so.[5]

[5] [Butler's language on what constitutes a miracle is remarkably guarded and clear. His 'Analogy' was published before Hume's 'Essay on Miracles,' but it answered by anticipation a large part of that writer's theory. "A miracle" says Hume, in substance, "is a transgression of the laws of Nature, but the laws of Nature are established by unalterable experience: Miracles, therefore, are

Now, either there was no course of Nature at the time which we are speaking of, or, if there were, we are not acquainted what the course of Nature is, upon the first peopling of worlds. And therefore the question, whether mankind had a revelation made to them at that time, is to be considered, not as a question concerning a miracle, but as a common question of fact. And we have the like reason, be it more or less, to admit the report of tradition, concerning this question, and concerning common matters of fact of the same antiquity; for instance, what part of the earth was first peopled.

Or thus: When mankind was first placed in this state, there was a power exerted, totally different from the present course of Nature. Now, whether this power, thus wholly different from the present course of Nature, for we cannot properly apply to it the word *miraculous*; whether this power stopped immediately after it had made man, or went on, and exerted itself further in giving him a revelation, is a question of the same kind, as whether an ordinary power exerted itself in such a particular degree and manner or not.

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contrary to uniform experience. But our belief of facts rests on experience of the truth of testimony, and *that* experience is variable. Hence, as the variable experience must yield to the uniform, miracles are not credible, nor can any testimony make them so." Here there are nearly as many fallacies as words. Hume denied the existence of an external world; his "laws of Nature" are simply ideas in a certain succession: so that to deny such a succession as miracles imply is on his theory to deny admitted facts. "Laws of Nature," moreover, are simply uniformities of sequence, yet he here intimates that they may be "transgressed;" a word properly applicable to moral delinquencies. There is one sophism in 'experience,' which either begs the question, or asserts that miracles are contrary to particular experience—which is nothing to the purpose. Another in "contrary," for a miracle is not contrary to the experience even of the man who has never seen one. Campbell shows that so far from belief in testimony being founded on experience, it is distrust of testimony that experience gives. If Hume's reasoning, moreover, be sound, then creation and a deluge are both incredible; and even on Hume's reasoning we must receive the gospel, for to believe the evidences of religion untrue is, *under the circumstances*, to admit a greater violation of the common course of human beha-

Or suppose the power exerted in the formation of the world be considered as miraculous, or rather, be called by that name, the case will not be different; since it must be acknowledged that such a power was exerted. For supposing it acknowledged that our Saviour spent some years in a course of working miracles, there is no more presumption, worth mentioning, against his having exerted this miraculous power in a certain degree greater, than in a certain degree less; in one or two more instances, than in one or two fewer; in this, than in another manner.

It is evident then that there can be no peculiar presumption, from the analogy of Nature, against supposing a revelation when man was first placed upon the earth.[6]

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viour than any of the miracles of the gospel, or even than all combined. All these fallacies are met by Butler's statements. "A miracle," says he, "is something different from the course of Nature as known;" *contrary* to it is another thing; different from it even, as unknown, is more than can be affirmed: for miracles may be parts of a higher law.—Compare 'Restoration of Belief,' p. 336. "The difference between the natural and the supernatural is relative, not absolute—it is not essential. . . . These miracles, so we on earth must call them, and which we are accustomed to speak of as inroads upon the course of Nature, are, if truly considered, so many fragmentary instances of the eternal order of an upper world."

It is instructive to notice that geology furnishes one of the most decisive replies in fact to Hume's sophism. "Any one," says Sir C. Lyell, "who presumes to dogmatize respecting the absolute uniformity of the order of Nature, is rebuked by geological evidence of the changes which that order has already undergone."—*Principles of Geology*, 153–164.]

6 ["That man could not have *made* himself is often appealed to as a proof of the agency of a Divine *Creator*; and that mankind could not in the first instance have civilized themselves is a proof of the same kind, and of precisely equal strength, of the agency of a Divine *Instructor*." . . . So reasons Archbishop Whately ('On the Origin of Civilization,' p. 19), applying his remarks to religion also. Humboldt, Niebuhr, and others, are quoted as sustaining the same views. President Smith, of New Jersey, expresses his opinion that both reason and history favour the conclusion that life even could not have been preserved in the savage state, unless man had received some instruction from his Creator.]

Add, that there does not appear the least intimation in 3 history or tradition that religion was first reasoned out; but the whole of history and tradition makes for the other side, that it came into the world by revelation. Indeed the state of religion, in the first ages of which we have any account, seems to suppose and imply that this was the original of it amongst mankind. And these reflections together, without taking in the peculiar authority of Scripture, amount to real and a very material degree of evidence, that there was a revelation at the beginning of the world. Now this, as it is a confirmation of natural religion, and therefore mentioned in the former part of this treatise;[7] so likewise it has a tendency to remove any prejudices against a subsequent revelation.

III. But still it may be objected, that there is some peculiar presumption, from analogy, against miracles, particularly against revelation, after the settlement and during the continuance of a course of Nature.

Now, with regard to this supposed presumption, it is to be 1 observed in general that before we can have ground for raising what can, with any propriety, be called an *argument* from analogy, for or against revelation considered as somewhat miraculous, we must be acquainted with a similar or parallel case. But the history of some other world, seemingly in like circumstances with our own, is no more than a parallel case; and therefore nothing short of this can be so. Yet could we come at a presumptive proof, for or against a revelation, from being informed whether such world had one or not; such a proof, being drawn from one single instance only, must be infinitely precarious. More particularly, first 2 of all, there is a very strong presumption against common speculative truths, and against the most ordinary facts, before the proof of them, which yet is overcome by almost any proof. There is a presumption of millions to one against the story of Cæsar, or of any other man.[8] For suppose a number

[7] P. 124, etc.

[8] [The statement in this paragraph (that men believe common facts, though the chances are as millions to one against them, and that the miraculousness of any such fact would add little appreciable to the presumption against it) is not accurate. There is, indeed, a double error. It confounds history and prophecy,

of common facts so and so circumstanced, of which one had no kind of proof, should happen to come into one's thoughts, every one would, without any possible doubt, conclude them to be false. And the like may be said of a single common fact. And from hence it appears that the question of importance, as to the matter before us, is concerning the degree of the peculiar presumption supposed against miracles; not whether there be any peculiar presumption at all against them. For if there be the presumption of millions to one against the most common facts, what can a small presumption, additional to this, amount to though it be peculiar? It cannot be estimated, and is as nothing. The only material question is, whether there be any such presumption against
b miracles, as to render them in any sort incredible. Secondly, if we leave out the consideration of religion, we are in such

chances before fact, with chances after it, the report of an event that has occurred with the prediction of an event yet to come, and then affirms that the improbability of the truth of each is so great that the miraculousness of the event (supposing it miraculous) adds nothing appreciable to the improbability. For example, with a twenty-sided die the improbability beforehand of throwing any given number is as nineteen to one. After the die is thrown, and we are told that ten (say) has come up, we deem the report as not in itself improbable; *some* number must have come up and each number is in itself as improbable as another. Improbabilities before the fact (to use the logical distinction) differ from improbabilities after it. Those last are always a reason for doubt; the former are so or not as it may happen. (See Mill's *Logic*, vol. ii. p. 192—4, quoted by Fitzgerald). A miracle is, of course, of the nature of an improbability after the fact. That is, it is in itself unlikely, and needs to have proportionately decisive evidence.

Though this correction of Butler's statement seems at first sight to weaken his argument for the probability of miracles, it strengthens the evidence for Christianity as a whole. The chances, for example, against the fortuitous truth of the direct prophecies concerning Christ (upwards of a hundred) are innumerable. It is millions to one that a Messiah should appear at the time, in the place, with the qualities, indicated, unless all had been done according to God's determinate counsel. Once, however, let it be admitted that a Messiah has appeared, miraculously incarnate; and his miracles become rather likely than otherwise. The chances against them are small. They are completely of a piece with all his proceedings.]

total darkness upon what causes, occasions, reasons, or circumstances, the present course of Nature depends, that there does not appear any improbability for or against supposing, that five or six thousand years may have given scope for causes, occasions, reasons, or circumstances, from whence miraculous interpositions may have arisen. And from this, joined with the foregoing observation, it will follow that there must be a presumption, beyond all comparison greater, against the *particular* common facts just now instanced in, than against miracles *in general*, before any evidence of either. But, thirdly, take in the consideration of religion, or the moral system of the world, and then we see distinct particular reasons for miracles; to afford mankind instruction additional to that of Nature, and to attest the truth of it. And this gives a real credibility to the supposition, that it might be part of the original plan of things that there should be miraculous interpositions. Then, lastly, miracles must not be compared to common natural events, or to events which, though uncommon, are similar to what we daily experience; but to the extraordinary phenomena of nature. And then the comparison will be between the presumption against miracles, and the presumption against such uncommon appearances, suppose, as comets, and against there being any such powers in Nature as magnetism and electricity, so contrary to the properties of other bodies not endued with these powers. And before any one can determine whether there be any peculiar presumption against miracles more than against other extraordinary things, he must consider what, upon first hearing, would be the presumption against the last-mentioned appearances and powers to a person acquainted only with the daily, monthly, and annual course of Nature respecting this earth, and with those common powers of matter which we every day see.

Upon all this I conclude, that there certainly is no such presumption against miracles as to render them in any wise incredible; that, on the contrary, our being able to discern reasons for them gives a positive credibility to the history of them, in cases where those reasons hold; and that it is by no means certain that there is any peculiar presumption at all, from analogy, even in the lowest degree, against miracles, as distinguished from other extraordinary phenomena;

though it is not worth while to perplex the reader with inquiries into the abstract nature of evidence, in order to determine a question which, without such inquiries, we see is of no importance.

CHAPTER III.

OF OUR INCAPACITY OF JUDGING WHAT WERE TO BE EXPECTED IN A REVELATION; AND THE CREDIBILITY, FROM ANALOGY, THAT IT MUST CONTAIN THINGS APPEARING LIABLE TO OBJECTIONS.

[THE objection to Christianity, as miraculous, has been already considered (Chap. ii.). Other objections against its deficiencies, its doctrine of redemption, its want of universality, its evidences, are considered hereafter. In this chapter, objections against Christianity as a scheme (not against its evidences), are shown to be frivolous. It is probable, from analogy, that Christianity will contain much that is different FROM OUR EXPECTATIONS (or anticipations, see note 3), and therefore OBJECTIONABLE.

A Apply the first part of this statement to Christianity, as a whole. It is likely to contain much that is different from our expectations.

1 In Nature we find that God rules and instructs according to certain laws. In Scripture we are told new truths connected with his government; and these two make together one scheme of Providence.

2 We are, in fact, incompetent judges of the first, as has been shown. It is, therefore, probable that we shall be incompetent judges of the second. Both are likely to appear objectionable.

B Apply this statement to instruction by inspiration. It is likely to differ from what we expect.

In the case of natural religion, we know not, before experience, by what laws or means, or to what degree, or by what evidence, or in what mode, or even through what faculty it will be imparted. So in what is revealed.

And, if any object that we are competent judges on some points, that *oral* revelation, for example, is a better means of

avoiding mistakes than written; it is answered, that we are not told what God's purpose is, and so cannot compare the different means for securing it.

C Hence the following conclusions:

1 As to Christianity as a whole, we are incompetent judges of what may be expected in a revelation. Therefore, the only question is, whether Christianity is a real revelation; not whether it is what we expect it to be. The only valid objection to it, if there be any, is against its evidence.

2 As to the way in which its instruction is given, the only question is, whether it is a Divine book, not whether it is such or such a book. For deficient style, or deficient evidence of genuineness, or various readings in the text, are no proofs against it, unless it was promised that a Divine revelation should be free from these presumed difficulties. And

3 As to interpretation, we must accept that meaning which seems the true one, and not raise any objection that it is less clearly expressed than we hoped.

Obj. To these conclusions, it may be objected, that internal improbabilities (that is, things contrary to expectation) weaken external probable proof. True. But, as has been seen, real internal improbabilities are overcome by the most common testimony. And, in revelation, we scarcely know what improbabilities are.

D To expand this last statement, and explain the second part of the statement made at the outset, that revelation is likely to contain much that appears OBJECTIONABLE, note

1 That the instruction given to men and brutes respectively, is very objectionable in its limits, thus: it is objectionable

a That we should be instructed in the laws of matter more easily and truly than in the cure of diseases.

b That we discover, as by accident, what years of inquiry fail to attain.

c That language is liable to infinite abuse; and is, at best, ambiguous.

d That brute instinct is often more skilful than human prudence.

2 So is revealed instruction likely to be liable to similar objections, as to its character and degrees. Nor are these objections more numerous than we might expect them to be.

E Apply this reason to a particular case, to see more clearly its force and applicability. It is said, the gifts in the apostolic age were not miraculous, because not used in an orderly manner. To which answer,

1 Those who used them had power over them; and the use of them depended, as might be expected, on the prudence or imprudence of the possessor. So they are like other gifts; and, if it be said, these gifts should have been given only to the prudent, or that prudence ought to have been added to the gift, or that God should have interposed. Answer—

2 We cannot judge what ought to have been the degree of the gift; nor are gifts generally given in Nature according to the prudence of those who own them. Nor is instruction generally given in common life, in such forms only as best commend it to us.

F The analogy between the natural and revealed methods of instruction, may be further applied.

1 In Nature, practical rules of conduct are generally plain. So are the faith and behaviour of practical Christianity.

2 In Nature, exact thought is sometimes required for the study of parts; so in the study of parts of Scripture.

3 Progress in each department, is hindered by the same, or similar causes.

4 In Nature, as in Scripture, the full discovery of truth seems to depend on the progress of learning, of liberty, and upon the diligence of the studious. *All* the Bible is not now understood; nor is the whole of Nature.

To these analogies, between the instruction imparted by the two schemes (1), and between the two schemes themselves (2), it is objected,

1 That natural instruction is comparatively unimportant; whereas religious instruction is essential. Answer—

a This distinction is not material to the argument; which is, that Nature gives, not as we expect, but differently.

b Some of the things not told us in Nature *are* important, and even essential, to comfort; and

c Whatever be thought of these statements, still, neither in Nature, nor, therefore, in religion, does God dispense instruction according to our notions of its importance.

2 That Christianity, being professedly a remedial system, is not likely to be so open to objections or perversions, as natural revelation. Answer—

a If both are from the same hand, this arrangement is by no means incredible; since remedies in Nature (for diseases really fatal) are often late discovered, doubted, and perverted, etc. And further, on this principle of reasoning,

b If the remedies, natural or Christian, are not true, because not what we might expect, then the diseases themselves are not true, for they also are against expectation.

whole gather two conclusions; the one negative, and
r positive.
t reason is no judge of ANYTHING in regard to revela-
because it is not judge of everything), for reason may
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meaning of Scripture, and also,
morality; that is, not whether it is what we might
ect from a holy God, but whether it is plainly not
rary to holiness, and to what Nature teaches us of
. It is true that objections are taken to Scripture
ality, but they apply equally to the constitution of
ure. Particular precepts also are objected to, but they
emporary, and refer to actions, not habits; and though
e to be perverted by enthusiasm, are of a piece with
ion as a system of probation.
evidence.
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eally analogous to the course of Nature.
heme of Christianity may even supply positive argu-
s in its favour, if it differs from the schemes which
usiasm and imposture have framed.]

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objections against the evidence for Christianity,
eged against the scheme of it; against the whole
hich it is put and left with the world, as well as
ral particular relations in Scripture; objections
he deficiencies of revelation; from things in it
men *foolishness*;[1] from its containing matters
hich have led, and it must have been foreseen
nto strange enthusiasm and superstition, and be
ve the purposes of tyranny and wickedness;
being universal; and, which is a thing of the
om its evidence not being so convincing and
s it might have been; for this last is sometimes
positive argument against its truth.[2] It would
deed impossible, to enumerate the several par-

[1] Cor. i. 28. [2] See chap. vi.

ticulars comprehended under the objections here referred to, they being so various according to the different fancies of men. There are persons who think it a strong objection against the authority of Scripture, that it is not composed by rules of art, agreed upon by critics, for polite and correct writing. And the scorn is inexpressible, with which some of the prophetic parts of Scripture are treated; partly through the rashness of interpreters, but very much also on account of the hieroglyphical and figurative language in which they are left us. Some of the principal things of this sort shall be particularly considered in following chapters. But my design at present is to observe in general, with respect to this whole way of arguing, that upon supposition of a revelation, it is highly credible beforehand we should be incompetent judges of it to a great degree; and that it would contain many things appearing to us liable to great objections, in case we judge of it otherwise than by the analogy of Nature. And therefore, though objections against the evidence of Christianity are most seriously to be considered, yet objections against Christianity itself are, in a great measure, frivolous; almost all objections against it, excepting those which are alleged against the particular proofs of its coming from God. I express myself with caution, lest I should be mistaken to vilify reason, which is indeed the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself; or be misunderstood to assert that a supposed revelation cannot be proved false from internal characters. For it may contain clear immoralities or contradictions, and either of these would prove it false. Nor will I take upon me to affirm, that nothing else can possibly render any supposed revelation incredible. Yet still the observation above is, I think, true beyond doubt, that objections against Christianity, as distinguished from objections against its evidence, are frivolous. To make out this is the general design of the present chapter. And with regard to the whole of it, I cannot but particularly wish that the proofs might be attended to, rather than the assertions cavilled at, upon account of any unacceptable consequences, whether real or supposed, which may be drawn from them. For, after all, that which is true must be admitted, though it should show us the shortness of our faculties; and that

we are in nowise judges of many things of which we are apt to think ourselves very competent ones. Nor will this be any objection with reasonable men, at least upon second thought it will not be any objection with such, against the justness of the following observations.

As God governs the world, and instructs his creatures, A
according to certain laws or rules in the known course of
Nature, known by reason together with experience; so the
Scripture informs us of a scheme of Divine providence addi- 1
tional to this. It relates that God has, by revelation, in-
structed men in things concerning his government, which
they could not otherwise have known; and reminded them
of things which they might otherwise know; and attested
the truth of the whole by miracles. Now if the natural and
the revealed dispensation of things are both from God, if
they coincide with each other, and together make up one
scheme of Providence; our being incompetent judges of one,
must render it credible that we may be incompetent judges
also of the other. Since, upon experience, the acknowledged
constitution and course of Nature is found to be greatly dif-
ferent from what, before experience, would have been ex-
pected; and such as, men fancy, there lie great objections
against; this renders it beforehand highly credible, that they
may find the revealed dispensation likewise, if they judge of
it as they do of the constitution of Nature, very different 2
from expectations formed beforehand, and liable in appear-
ance to great objections; objections against the scheme
itself, and against the degrees and manners of the miracu-
lous interpositions by which it was attested and carried on.
Thus suppose a prince to govern his dominions in the wisest manner possible by common known laws, and that upon some exigencies he should suspend these laws, and govern in several instances in a different manner; if one of his subjects were not a competent judge beforehand, by what common rules the government should or would be carried on, it could not be expected that the same person would be a competent judge, in what exigencies or in what manner, or to what degree, those laws commonly observed would be suspended or deviated from. If he were not a judge of the wisdom of the ordinary administration, there is no reason to think he would

be a judge of the wisdom of the extraordinary. If he thought he had objections against the former, doubtless, it is highly supposable, he might think also that he had objections against the latter. And thus as we fall into infinite follies and mistakes, whenever we pretend, otherwise than from experience and analogy, to judge of the constitution and course of Nature, it is evidently supposable beforehand that we should fall into as great, in pretending to judge in like manner, concerning revelation. Nor is there any more ground to expect that this latter should appear to us clear of objections than that the former should.

B These observations, relating to the whole of Christianity, are applicable to inspiration in particular. As we are in no sort judges beforehand, by what laws or rules, in what degree, or by what means, it were to have been expected that God would naturally instruct us; so upon supposition of his affording us light and instruction by revelation, additional to what he has afforded us by reason and experience, we are in no sort judges by what methods, and in what proportion, it were to be expected that this supernatural light and instruction would be afforded us. We know not beforehand what degree or kind of natural information it were to be expected God would afford men, each by his own reason and experience; nor how far he would enable and effectually dispose them to communicate it, whatever it should be, to each other; nor whether the evidence of it would be certain, highly probable, or doubtful; nor whether it would be given with equal clearness and conviction to all. Nor could we guess, upon any good ground I mean, whether natural knowledge, or even the faculty itself, by which we are capable of attaining it, reason, would be given us at once or gradually. In like manner, we are wholly ignorant what degree of new knowledge, it were to be expected, God would give mankind by revelation, upon supposition of his affording one; or how far, or in what way, he would interpose miraculously to qualify them, to whom he should originally make the revelation, for communicating the knowledge given by it; and to secure their doing it to the age in which they should live, and to secure its being transmitted to posterity. We are equally ignorant whether the evidence of it would be certain, or

highly probable, or doubtful;[3] or whether all who should have any degree of instruction from it, and any degree of evidence of its truth, would have the same; or whether the scheme would be revealed at once or unfolded gradually. Nay we are not in any sort able to judge whether it were to have been expected, that the revelation should have been committed to writing, or left to be handed down, and consequently corrupted by verbal tradition, and at length sunk under it if mankind so pleased, and during such time as they are permitted, in the degree they evidently are, to act as they will.

But it may be said "that a revelation in some of the above-mentioned circumstances, one, for instance, which was not committed to writing, and thus secured against danger of corruption, would not have answered its purpose." I ask, what purpose? It would not have answered all the purposes which it has now answered, and in the same degree; but it would have answered others, or the same in different degrees. And which of these were the purposes of God, and best fell in with his general government, we could not at all have determined beforehand.

Now since it has been shown that we have no principles of reason upon which to judge beforehand, how it were to be expected revelation should have been left, or what was most suitable to the Divine plan of government, in any of the forementioned respects; it must be quite frivolous to object afterwards as to any of them, against its being left in one way rather than another; for this would be to object against things upon account of their being different from expecta-

[3] See chap vi. [The heading of this chapter seems at first a violation of Butler's own principle. It is in sense: "We know not what to expect in revelation, and yet it may be expected to contain things apparently liable to objection." The *reasonings* of the chapter make the meaning plain. The *anticipations* of reason, apart from facts, are no sure guide as to what a revelation will contain. The *expectation* founded on analogy leads us to look for much that is apparently objectionable and mysterious. Bacon marks this distinction between the two words, when he calls the old philosophy "anticipatio mentis" (anticipation of the mind), and his own "interpretatio naturæ" (the interpretation of nature.)]

tions, which have been shown to be without reason. And thus we see, that the only question concerning the truth of Christianity is, whether it be a real revelation, not whether it be attended with every circumstance which we should have looked for; and concerning the authority of Scripture, whether it be what it claims to be, not whether it be a book of such sort, and so promulgated, as weak men are apt to
2 fancy a book containing a Divine revelation should. And therefore neither obscurity, nor seeming inaccuracy of style, nor various readings, nor early disputes, about the authors of particular parts; nor any other things of the like kind, though they had been much more considerable in degree than they are, could overthrow the authority of the Scripture; unless the prophets, apostles, or our Lord had promised that the book containing the Divine revelation should be secure from those things. Nor indeed can any objections overthrow such a kind of revelation as the Christian claims to be, since there are no objections against the morality of it,[4] but such as can show that there is no proof of miracles wrought originally in attestation of it; no appearance of anything miraculous in its obtaining in the world; nor any of prophecy, that is of events foretold, which human sagacity could not foresee. If it can be shown that the proof alleged for all these is absolutely none at all, then is revelation overturned. But were it allowed that the proof of any one or all of them is lower than is allowed, yet whilst any proof of them remains, revelation will stand upon much the same foot it does at present, as to all the purposes of life and practice, and ought to have the like influence upon our behaviour.

3 From the foregoing observations, too, it will follow, and those who will thoroughly examine into revelation will find it worth remarking, that there are several ways of arguing, which, though just with regard to other writings, are not applicable to Scripture, at least not to the prophetic parts of it. We cannot argue, for instance, that this cannot be the sense or intent of such a passage of Scripture; for if it had, it would have been expressed more plainly, or have been represented under a more apt figure or hieroglyphic

[4] Page 193.

yet we may justly argue thus, with respect to common books.[5] And the reason of this difference is very evident; that in Scripture we are not competent judges, as we are in common books, how plainly it were to have been expected, what is the true sense should have been expressed, or under how apt an image figured. The only question is, what appearance there is that this is the sense; and scarce at all how much more determinately or accurately it might have been expressed or figured.

"But is it not self-evident that internal improbabilities of all kinds weaken external probable proof?" Doubtless. But to what practical purpose can this be alleged here, when it has been proved before,[6] that real internal improbabilities, which rise even to moral certainty, are overcome by the most ordinary testimony; and when it now has been made appear, that we scarce know what are improbabilities, as to the matter we are here considering, as it will further appear from what follows.

For though from the observations above made it is manifest that we are not in any sort competent judges, what supernatural instructions were to have been expected; and though it is self-evident that the objections of an incompetent judgment must be frivolous; yet it may be proper to

[5] [We must interpret Scripture, its announcements and disclosures, in accordance with what it professes to be—an inspired volume designed to set forth the plan of salvation by Christ, and to bring men to God. So far as it is like other books it must be interpreted by the same laws as other books . . . but so far as it differs from other books, being inspired and intended for all time, we must give its phrases and intimations a plenary and spiritual significance. . . . If the writers of the Scriptures did not foresee all the truths which might be drawn from their words, God the Holy Spirit foresaw them; and the business of interpretation is to learn *his* purpose in what is revealed. To explain the inspired Scriptures, therefore, in all respects as if they were human compositions with no wider range, is to dishonour the Scriptures and injure the church. See *Advancement of Learning*, Works, ii. 308—311; *Bible Hand-book*, Rel. Tr. Soc. p. 355. A similar view may be seen in Benson's *Hulsean Lectures on Scripture Difficulties*.

Of course prophecies which require this plenary interpretation are less suited for evidence than those which are simple and clear.]

[6] P. 175.

go one step further and observe, that if men will be regard-
less of these things, and pretend to judge of the Scripture
by preconceived expectations, the analogy of Nature shows
beforehand, not only that it is highly credible they may, but
also probable that they will, imagine they have strong
objections against it, however really unexceptionable; for
so, prior to experience, they would think they had, against
the circumstances, and degrees, and the whole manner of
that instruction, which is afforded by the ordinary course of
I Nature. Were the instruction which God affords to brute
creatures by instincts and mere propensions, and to mankind
by these together with reason, matter of probable proof, and
not of certain observation; it would be rejected as incredible
in many instances of it, only upon account of the means by
which this instruction is given, the seeming disproportions,
the limitations, necessary conditions, and circumstances of
it. For instance, would it not have been thought highly
a improbable that men should have been so much more capable
of discovering, even to certainty, the general laws of matter,
and the magnitudes, paths, and revolutions of the heavenly
bodies, than the occasions and cures of distempers, and
many other things, in which human life seems so much more
nearly concerned, than in astronomy? How capricious and
irregular a way of information, would it be said, is that of
b *invention*, by means of which Nature instructs us in matters
of science, and in many things upon which the affairs of the
world greatly depend; that a man should by this faculty, be
made acquainted with a thing in an instant, when, perhaps,
he is thinking of somewhat else, which he has in vain been
searching after it may be for years. So likewise the imper-
fections attending the only method by which Nature enables
and directs us to communicate our thoughts to each other,
c are innumerable. Language is, in its very nature, inadequate,
ambiguous, liable to infinite abuse, even from negligence;
and so liable to it from design, that every man can deceive
and betray by it. And to mention but one instance more;
that brutes without reason should act in many respects
d with a sagacity and foresight vastly greater than what men
have in those respects, would be thought impossible. Yet
it is certain they do act with such superior foresight,
2 whether it be their own indeed is another question. From

these things it is highly credible beforehand, that upon supposition God should afford men some additional instruction by revelation, it would be with circumstances, in manners, degrees, and respects, which we should be apt to fancy we had great objections against the credibility of. Nor are the objections against the Scripture, nor against Christianity in general, at all more or greater than the analogy of Nature would beforehand—not perhaps give ground to expect; for this analogy may not be sufficient, in some cases, to ground an expectation upon; but no more nor greater than analogy would show it, beforehand, to be supposable and credible, that there might seem to lie against revelation.

By applying these general observations to a particular objection it will be more distinctly seen how they are applicable to others of the like kind; and indeed to almost all objections against Christianity, as distinguished from objections against its evidence. It appears from Scripture, that as it was not unusual in the apostolic age, for persons, upon their conversion to Christianity, to be endued with miraculous gifts;[7] so, some of those persons exercised these gifts in a strangely irregular and disorderly manner; and this is made an objection against their being really miraculous. Now the foregoing observations quite remove this objection, how considerable soever it may appear at first sight. For, consider a person endued with any of these gifts; for instance, that of tongues; it is to be supposed that he had the same power over this miraculous gift, as he would have had over it, had it been the effect of habit, of study and use, as it ordinarily is; or the same power over it, as he had over any other natural endowment. Consequently, he would use it in the same manner he did any other; either regularly and upon proper occasions only, or irregularly and upon improper ones; according to his sense of decency and his character of prudence. Where then is the objection? Why, if this miraculous power was indeed given to the world to propagate Christianity, and attest the truth of it, we might, it seems, have expected that other sort of persons should have been chosen to be invested with it, or that these should

[7] [The allusion here is to 1 Cor. xii. 1—11, where the abuse of the gift of tongues is rebuked.]

at the same time have been endued with prudence, or that
b they should have been continually restrained and directed
in the exercise of it, *i. e.*, that God should have miraculously
interposed, if at all, in a different manner or higher degree.
But from the observations made above, it is undeniably
evident, that we are not judges in what degrees and manners
it were to have been expected he should miraculously interpose; upon supposition of his doing it in some degree
and manner. Nor, in the natural course of Providence, are
superior gifts of memory, eloquence, knowledge, and other
talents of great influence, conferred only on persons of
prudence and decency, or such as are disposed to make the
properest use of them. Nor is the instruction and admonition naturally afforded us for the conduct of life, particularly in our education, commonly given in a manner the
most suited to recommend it; but often with circumstances
apt to prejudice us against such instruction.

F One might go on to add that there is a great resemblance
between the light of Nature and of revelation in several other
a respects. Practical Christianity, or that faith and behaviour
which renders a man a Christian, is a plain and obvious
thing; like the common rules of conduct, with respect to
our ordinary temporal affairs. The more distinct and particular knowledge of those things, the study of which the
b apostle calls *going on unto perfection*,[a] and of the prophetic
parts of revelation, like many parts of natural and even civil
knowledge, may require very exact thought, and careful
consideration. The hinderances too, of natural and of supernatural light and knowledge, have been of the same
c kind. And as it is owned the whole scheme of Scripture is
not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood,

[a] Heb. vi. 1. [A most accurate description of the only "development" which Protestantism can allow. There may be passages in the Bible whose full meaning is not yet discovered, and which are reserved, as Boyle expressed it, "to quell some future heresy, or resolve some yet unformed doubt, or confound some error that hath not yet a name," or to reward, as Butler would have said, yet more diligent research. But we are to look for no fresh revelation. Our insight will be not into new systems of truth, but into the clear yet profound depths of the meaning of the old.]

before the *restitution of all things*,[9] and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at; by the continuance and progress of learning and of liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing, intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints as it were dropped us by Nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible, that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered. For all the same phenomena and the same faculties of investigation, from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and last age, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before. And possibly it might be intended that events as they come to pass should open and ascertain the meaning of several parts of Scripture.

It may be objected that this analogy fails in a material respect; for that natural knowledge is of little or no consequence. But I have been speaking of the general instruction which Nature does or does not afford us. And besides, some parts of natural knowledge, in the more common restrained sense of the words, are of the greatest consequence to the ease and convenience of life. But suppose the analogy did, as it does not, fail in this respect, yet it might be abundantly supplied from the whole constitution and course of Nature, which shows that God does not dispense his gifts according to our notions of the advantage and consequence they would be of to us. And this in general, with his method of dispensing knowledge in particular, would together make out an analogy full to the point before us.

But it may be objected still further and more generally; "The Scripture represents the world as in a state of ruin, and Christianity as an expedient to recover it, to help in those respects where Nature fails; in particular, to supply the deficiencies of natural light. Is it credible then, that so many ages should have been let pass, before a matter of

[9] Acts iii. 21

such a sort, of so great and so general importance, was made known to mankind; and then that it should be made known to so small a part of them? Is it conceivable, that this supply should be so very deficient, should have the like obscurity and doubtfulness, be liable to the like perversions, in short, lie open to all the like objections, as the light of Nature itself?"[10] Without determining how far this in fact is so, I answer, it is by no means incredible that it might be so if the light of Nature and of revelation be from the same hand. Men are naturally liable to diseases, for which God, in his good providence, has provided natural remedies.[11] But remedies existing in Nature have been unknown to mankind for many ages; are known but to few now; probably many valuable ones are not known yet. Great has been and is the obscurity and difficulty, in the nature and application of them. Circumstances seem often to make them very improper, where they are absolutely necessary. It is after long labour and study, and many unsuccessful endeavours, that they are brought to be as useful as they are; after high contempt and absolute rejection of the most useful we have; and after disputes and doubts which have seemed to be endless. The best remedies too, when unskilfully, much more if dishonestly applied, may produce new diseases, and with the rightest application the success of them is often doubtful. In many cases they are not at all effectual; where they are, it is often very slowly; and the application of them and the necessary regimen accompanying it, is not uncommonly so disagreeable that some will not submit to them; and satisfy themselves with the excuse, that if they would, it is not certain whether it would be successful. And many persons who labour under diseases for which there are known natural remedies, are not so happy as to be always, if ever, in the way of them. In a word, the remedies which Nature has provided for diseases are neither certain, perfect, nor universal. And indeed the same principles of arguing which would lead us to conclude that they must be so, would lead us likewise to conclude that there could be no occasion for them, *i. e.* that there could be no diseases at all. And therefore our experience that there are diseases shows, that it is

[10] Chap. vi. [11] See chap. v

credible beforehand, upon supposition Nature has provided remedies for them, that these remedies may be, as by experience we find they are, not certain, nor perfect, nor universal; because it shows that the principles upon which we should expect the contrary are fallacious.

And now, what is the just consequence from all these things? Not that reason is no judge of what is offered to us as being of Divine revelation. For this would be to infer, that we are unable to judge of anything, because we are unable to judge of all things. Reason can, and it ought to judge, not only of the meaning but also of the morality and the evidence of revelation. First, it is the province of reason to judge of the morality of the Scripture, *i. e.* not whether it contains things different from what we should have expected from a wise, just, and good Being; for objections from hence have been now obviated; but whether it contains things plainly contradictory to wisdom, justice, or goodness; to what the light of Nature teaches us of God. And I know nothing of this sort objected against Scripture, excepting such objections as are formed upon suppositions, which would equally conclude, that the constitution of Nature is contradictory to wisdom, justice, or goodness; which most certainly it is not. Indeed, there are some particular precepts in Scripture given to particular persons requiring actions, which would be immoral and vicious, were it not for such precepts.[12] But it is easy to see, that all these are of such a kind, as that the precept changes the whole nature of the case and of the action, and both constitutes and shows that not to be unjust or immoral, which, prior to the precept, must have appeared and really have been so; which may well be, since none of these precepts are contrary to immutable morality. If it were commanded to cultivate the principles and act from the spirit of treachery, ingratitude, cruelty; the command would not alter the nature of the case or of the action, in any of these

[12] [Such is the extermination of the Canaanites. "In all those Instances," says Dr. Chalmers, "the Israelites were but the executioners of a sentence; and to charge immorality on the procedure is to confound the administrative acts of a government with its laws."—*Lectures*, p. 57. To make similar acts commendable, they must be done under similar authority.]

instances. But it is quite otherwise in precepts which require only the doing an external action; for instance, taking away the property or life of any. For men have no right to either life or property, but what arises solely from the grant of God; when this grant is revoked, they cease to have any right at all in either; and when this revocation is made known, as surely it is possible it may be, it must cease to be unjust to deprive them of either. And though a course of external acts, which without command would be immoral, must make an immoral habit; yet a few detached commands have no such natural tendency. I thought proper to say thus much of the few Scripture precepts, which require, not vicious actions, but actions which would have been vicious had it not been for such precepts; because they are sometimes weakly urged as immoral, and great weight is laid upon objections drawn from them. But to me there seems no difficulty at all in these precepts, but what arises from their being offences, *i. e.* from their being liable to be perverted, as indeed they are, by wicked designing men, to serve the most horrid purposes, and perhaps to mislead the weak and enthusiastic. And objections from this head are not objections against revelation, but against the whole notion of religion as a trial, and against the general constitution of Nature. Secondly. Reason is able to judge, and must, of the
c evidence of revelation, and of the objections urged against that evidence, which shall be the subject of a following chapter.[13]

2 But the consequence of the foregoing observations is, that the question upon which the truth of Christianity depends is scarce at all, what objections there are against its scheme, since there are none against the morality of it; but *what objections there are against its evidence*; or, *what proof there remains of it, after due allowances made for the objections against that proof*; because it has been shown that the *objections against Christianity as distinguished from objections against its evidence are frivolous*. For surely very little weight, if any at all, is to be laid upon a way of arguing and objecting, which, when applied to the general constitution of Nature, experience shows not to be conclusive; and such I

[13] Chap. vii.

think is the whole way of objecting treated of throughout this chapter. It is resolvable into principles, and goes upon suppositions, which mislead us to think that the Author of Nature would not act as we experience he does, or would act, in such and such cases as we experience he does not in like cases. But the unreasonableness of this way of objecting will appear yet more evidently from hence, that the chief things thus objected against are justified, as shall be further shown[14], by distinct, particular, and full analogies, in the constitution and course of Nature.

But it is to be remembered that as frivolous as objections of the foregoing sort against revelation are, yet, when a supposed revelation is more consistent with itself, and has a more general and uniform tendency to promote virtue, than, all circumstances considered, could have been expected from enthusiasm and political views; this is a presumptive proof of its not proceeding from them, and so of its truth; because we are competent judges, what might have been expected from enthusiasm and political views.[15]

[14] Chap. iv. latter part, and v. vi.

[15] [This suggestive sentence is the principle on which all internal evidence on the truth of Scripture doctrines rests. What perfect wisdom will reveal, man cannot foresee; but what fraud and enthusiasm reveal, man knows. Though, therefore, we are not competent to decide what Scripture ought to teach, we are competent to decide on the alternative, and affirm whether what is taught in Scripture is what might be looked for from enthusiasts and impostors.—See *Lessons on the Evidences* (by Archbishop Whately).

This chapter Dr. Chalmers justly deems one of the most important in the book. "The spirit evinced in it is identical with that of the experimental or Baconian philosophy: a spirit in the first instance of the utmost hardihood in resolutely maintaining to be true all that accords with the findings of experience; and a spirit, in the second instance, of the utmost humility in that sentiment of diffidence wherewith it regards all the fancies of presumptuous, however plausible, speculation."]

CHAPTER IV.

OF CHRISTIANITY, CONSIDERED AS A SCHEME OR CONSTITUTION, IMPERFECTLY COMPREHENDED.[1]

[It may be true, as shown (chap. iii.), that we are imperfect judges of the Christian system. Still are the things objected to really wise and good? And, before proceeding to notice these things in detail, there is a general argument, similar to the one given in Part I. chap. vii., which needs to be remembered—viz., that Christianity is a scheme, like God's natural government, imperfectly comprehended; that the whole is credibly consistent with goodness, and illustrative of it; and that, if we knew all, it would appear to be so.

A As *moral* government, so *Christian*, is an incomprehensible scheme.

1 It is a scheme, under the plan of Providence, seeking the final perfection of man; beginning with our recovery, and involving the office of a Messiah, a sanctifying Spirit, invisible government over the Church, a gradual preparation of the redeemed for heaven, and a final judgment.

2 And it is a scheme imperfectly comprehended; a mystery of godliness; the things revealed ever running up into mysteries, and a large part of it still undisclosed.

B Note two important particular analogies between the two:

1 As the natural government of God, so Christianity uses, to accomplish ends, means, undesirable it may be, or "foolish," yet, in Nature, none the less appropriate to secure the desired result.

2 As the natural government of God, so Christianity is carried out by general laws.

a That God's natural government is so carried on we conclude from the many cases in which we can trace those laws. "By analogy" we apply to all what we see to be true of a part. So,

[1] [The aphorisms of three very different men are worth quoting in connexion with this chapter. "Either nothing is mysterious," says Dr. Thomas Brown, "or everything is." "The last step of reason," says Pascal, "is to know that there is an infinitude of things which surpass it." "Of the dark parts of revelation," says Warburton, "there are two sorts: one which may be cleared up by the studious application of well-employed talents; the other, which will always reside within the shadow of God's throne, where it would be impiety to intrude." A Christianity without mystery is a shallow faith, as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural.]

b We may conclude that Christianity is carried on by general laws, even though, in particular cases, we see only the fact, and not the law, as in miracles. Hence, though some exigencies may be met by miracles, yet every exigency may not be so met; a reason for miraculous interposition in some cases, and not in all.

c Hence conclude that, as Christianity is a scheme with means and general laws, it is liable to objections from apparent deficiencies and irregularities, which would cease if the whole case were known.

D Objections to a Christian scheme, as a fact, have been met (chap. iii.). Objections against its consistency with wisdom and goodness have been already met in this chapter. Objections to particular parts of the scheme may be met by particular analogies in Nature. In the following chapter other parts are taken up. There it is intended to notice a particular objection to the scheme as a whole, involving especially a use of intricate means for the salvation of the world. No just objection to Christianity can hence arise; for

1 In Nature and in Providence (the seasons, the progress of nations, for example,) means equally intricate and tedious are employed, so that the objection applies equally to Nature and to religion. And, further,

2 *We* distinguish means and ends; while, in fact, the distinction may be absurd. And certainly, with God, means may be as important a part of the process as the end itself.

These are expanded.]

It hath been now shown,[2] that the analogy of Nature renders it highly credible beforehand, that supposing a revelation to be made it must contain many things very different from what we should have expected, and such as appear open to great objections; and that this observation, in good measure, takes off the force of those objections, or rather precludes them. But it may be alleged that this is a very partial answer to such objections, or a very unsatisfactory way of obviating them; because it doth not show at all, that the things objected against can be wise, just, and good; much less that it is credible they are so. It will, therefore, be proper to show this distinctly, by applying to these objec-

[2] In the foregoing chapter.

tions against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of Christianity, the answer above[3] given to the like objections against the constitutions of Nature; before we consider the particular analogies in the latter, to the particular things objected against in the former. Now that which affords a sufficient answer to objections against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of the constitution of Nature, is its being a constitution, a system or scheme, imperfectly comprehended, a scheme in which means are made use of to accomplish ends, and which is carried on by general laws. For from these things it has been proved, not only to be possible, but also to be credible, that those things which are objected against may be consistent with wisdom, justice, and goodness, nay may be instances of them; and even that the constitution and government of Nature may be perfect in the highest possible degree. If Christianity then be a scheme, and of the like kind; it is evident, the like objections against it must admit of the like answer. And,—

A 1. Christianity is a scheme quite beyond our comprehension. The moral government of God is exercised, by gradually conducting things so in the course of his providence, that every one at length and upon the whole, shall receive according to his deserts; and neither fraud nor
1 violence, but truth and right, shall finally prevail. Christianity is a particular scheme under this general plan of Providence, and a part of it, conducive to its completion, with regard to mankind; consisting itself also of various parts, and a mysterious economy which has been carrying on from the time the world came into its present wretched state, and is still carrying on for its recovery, by a Divine person, the Messiah; who is to *gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad*,[4] and establish *an everlasting kingdom, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*[5] And in order to it, after various manifestations of things relating to this great and general scheme of providence, through a succession of many ages; (for *the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets, testified beforehand his sufferings, and the glory that should follow; unto whom it was revealed, that not unto them*

[3] Part I. ch. vii. to which this all along refers.

[4] John xi. 52. [5] 2 Pet. iii. 13.

selves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto us by them that have preached the gospel; which things the angels desire to look into;[6]) after various dispensations, looking forward, and preparatory to this final salvation; *in the fulness of time*, when infinite wisdom thought fit; He, *being in the form of God,—made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*[7] Parts likewise of this economy are the miraculous mission of the Holy Ghost, and his ordinary assistances given to good men;[8] the invisible government, which Christ

[6] 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. [7] Phil. ii. [6, 11].

[8] ["The Holy Spirit given to good men" is one of the phrases in this volume to which, as a full statement of truth, exception is justly taken. It suggests the idea that his aid is given only to help on those who have already begun to help themselves; whereas the teaching of Scripture is, that to this Agent men owe their commencement (conversion) as well as their progress in holiness. It is his office not merely to reform, but to renew. . . . In the *first* part of this treatise Butler's phraseology on these topics is, perhaps, defensible (see Chap. v. note 11); but here we naturally look for expositions of truth more in accordance with the fulness and unction of the gospel. Of the aid of the Spirit in subduing our passions, and strengthening our virtue, we read much; but of his great work, in awakening men who sleep, in giving life to the dead in sin, in enlightening dark minds, in subduing proud and self-righteous hearts, and so creating all things new, we read little: an omission the more to be regretted, as this part of his office is the most characteristic of the gospel, and essential to an appreciation of the rest.

There is a sense, however, of the words of the text as important as it is just: strictly true, though not the whole truth: "the Holy Spirit is given to the good:" He descends in the largest measure on those who most warmly prize and most faithfully use his influences. "To him that hath is given" a rule in complete harmony with those laws of habit to which Butler has already referred.]

at present exercises over his church; that which he himself refers to in these words; *In my Father's house are many mansions—I go to prepare a place for you*:[9] and his future return to *judge the world in righteousness*, and completely re-establish the kingdom of God. *For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.*[10] *All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth.*[11] *And he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*[12] Now little, surely, need be said to show that this system or scheme of
2 things is but imperfectly comprehended by us. The Scripture expressly asserts it to be so. And indeed one cannot read a passage relating to this *great mystery of godliness*,[13] but what immediately runs up into something which shows us our ignorance in it, as everything in Nature shows us our ignorance in the constitution of Nature. And whoever will seriously consider that part of the Christian scheme, which is revealed in Scripture, will find so much more unrevealed, as will convince him that to all the purposes of judging and objecting, we know as little of it as of the constitution of Nature. Our ignorance, therefore, is as much an answer to our objections against the perfection of one as against the perfection of the other.[14]

II. It is obvious, too, that in the Christian dispensation, as much as in the natural scheme of things, means are made use of to accomplish ends. And the observation of this furnishes us with the same answer, to objections against the perfection of Christianity, as to objections of the like kind, against the constitution of Nature. It shows the credibility that the things objected against, how *foolish*[15] soever they appear to men, may be the very best means of accomplishing

[9] John xiv. 2.
[10] John v. 22, 23.
[11] Matt. xxviii. 18.
[12] 1 Cor. xv. [25, 28.]
[13] 1 Tim. iii. 16.
[14] P. 182, etc.
[15] 1 Cor. i.

t ends. And their appearing *foolishness* is no against this, in a scheme so greatly beyond our on.[16]

redibility, that the Christian dispensation may 2
ll along carried on by general laws,[17] no less urse of Nature may require to be more distinctly Consider then, upon what ground it is we say, a
olo common course of Nature is carried on ac- general fore-ordained laws. We know, indeed, he general laws of matter; and a great part of behaviour of living agents is reducible to general we know in a manner nothing, by what laws tempests, earthquakes, famine, pestilence, be- struments of destruction to mankind. And the ich persons born into the world at such a time are of such capacities, geniuses, tempers; the ich thoughts come into our mind in a multitude d by which innumerable things happen, of the fluence upon the affairs and state of the world; are so wholly unknown to us, that we call the h come to pass by them, accidental; though all men know certainly that there cannot in reality thing as chance, and conclude that the things o this appearance are the result of general laws, reduced into them. It is then but an exceeding and in but a very few respects, that we can trace ural course of things before us, to general laws. only from analogy that we conclude the whole of pable of being reduced into them; only from our t part is so. It is from our finding that the course , in some respects and so far, goes on by general we conclude this of the rest.[18] And if that be a d for such a conclusion, it is a just ground also, onclude, yet to apprehend, to render it supposable
ble, which is sufficient for answering objections, s miraculous interpositions may have been all along anner, by *general* laws of wisdom. Thus, that

, 136. [17] P. 138, 139.
erschel's 'Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural , ch. iii

miraculous powers should be exerted at such times, upon such occasions, in such degrees and manners, and with regard to such persons rather than others, that the affairs of the world, being permitted to go on in their natural course so far, should, just at such a point, have a new direction given them by miraculous interpositions; that these interpositions should be exactly in such degrees and respects only; all this may have been by general laws. These laws are unknown indeed to us; but no more unknown, than the laws from whence it is, that some die as soon as they are born and others live to extreme old age, that one man is so superior to another in understanding, with innumerable more things which, as was before observed, we cannot reduce to any laws or rules at all, though it is taken for granted, they are as much reducible to general ones as gravitation. Now, if the revealed dispensations of Providence, and miraculous interpositions, be by general laws, as well as God's ordinary government in the course of Nature, made known by reason and experience; there is no more reason to expect that every exigence, as it arises, should be provided for by these general laws of miraculous interpositions, than that every exigence in Nature should by the general laws of Nature; yet there might be wise and good reasons that miraculous interpositions should be by general laws, and that these laws should not be broken in upon, or deviated from by other miracles.

CONCL. Upon the whole then, the appearance of deficiencies and C irregularities in Nature is owing to its being a scheme but in part made known, and of such a certain particular kind in other respects. Now we see no more reason why the frame and course of Nature should be such a scheme, than why Christianity should. And that the former is such a scheme renders it credible, that the latter, upon supposition of its truth, may be so too. And as it is manifest that Christianity is a scheme revealed but in part, and a scheme in which means are made use of to accomplish ends, like to that of Nature; so the credibility that it may have been all along carried on by general laws, no less than the course of Nature, has been distinctly proved. And from all this it is beforehand credible that there might, I think probable that there would, be the like appearance of deficiencies and

irregularities in Christianity as in Nature; *i. e.*, that Christianity would be liable to the like objections as the frame of Nature. And these objections are answered by these observations concerning Christianity; as the like objections against the frame of Nature are answered by the like observations concerning the frame of Nature.

The objections against Christianity, considered as a matter of fact,[19] having in general been obviated in the preceding chapter, and the same, considered as made against the wisdom and goodness of it having been obviated in this, the next thing according to the method proposed is to show, that the principal objections in particular against Christianity may be answered by particular and full analogies in Nature. And as one of them is made against the whole scheme of it together, as just now described, I choose to consider it here, rather than in a distinct chapter by itself. The thing objected D
against this scheme of the gospel is, "that it seems to suppose God was reduced to the necessity of a long series of intricate means in order to accomplish his ends, the recovery and salvation of the world: in like sort as men, for want of understanding or power, not being able to come at their ends directly, are forced to go round-about ways, and make use of many perplexed contrivances to arrive at them." Now everything which we see shows the folly of this, considered as an objection against the truth of Christianity. For according to our manner of conception God makes use of variety of means, what we often think tedious ones, in the natural 1
course of providence, for the accomplishment of all his ends. Indeed it is certain there is somewhat in this matter quite beyond our comprehension: but the mystery is as great in Nature as in Christianity. We know what we ourselves aim at, as final ends; and what courses we take, merely as means conducing to those ends. But we are greatly ignorant how far things are considered by the Author of Nature, under the single notion of means and ends; so as that it may 2
be said this is merely an end, and that merely means, in his regard. And whether there be not some peculiar absurdity in our very manner of conception concerning this matter,

[19] P. 131, etc.

somewhat contradictory arising from our extremely imperfect views of things, it is impossible to say. However, thus much is manifest, that the whole natural world and government of it is a scheme or system; not a fixed, but a progressive one: a scheme in which the operation of various means takes up a great length of time before the ends they tend to can be attained. The change of seasons, the ripening of the fruits of the earth, the very history of a flower, is an instance of this: and so is human life. Thus vegetable bodies, and those of animals, though possibly formed at once, yet grow up by degrees to a mature state. And thus rational agents, who animate these latter bodies, are naturally directed to form each his own manners and character, by the gradual gaining of knowledge and experience, and by a long course of action. Our existence is not only successive, as it must be of necessity; but one state of our life and being is appointed by God to be a preparation for another; and that, to be the means of attaining to another succeeding one: infancy to childhood; childhood to youth; youth to mature age. Men are impatient, and for precipitating things: but the Author of Nature appears deliberate throughout his operations, accomplishing his natural ends by slow successive steps.[20] And there is a plan of things beforehand laid out, which, from the nature of it, requires various systems of means, as well as length of time, in order to the carrying on its several parts into execution. Thus in the daily course of natural providence God operates in the very same manner, as in the dispensation of Christianity; making one thing subservient to another; this, to somewhat further; and so on, through a progressive series of means, which extend, both

[20] [Professor Fitzgerald quotes here an appropriate parallel passage from Guizot. "The ways of Providence are not confined within narrow limits; he hurries not himself to display to-day the consequences of the principle which he yesterday laid down; he will draw it out in the lapse of ages, when the hour is come; and even according to our reasoning, logic is not the less sure because it is slow. Providence is unconcerned as to time; his march (if I may be allowed the simile) is like that of the fabulous deities of Homer through space; he takes a step and ages have elapsed."—*Lectures on Civilization in Europe*, Lect. 1.]

backward and forward, beyond our utmost view.[21] Of this manner of operation, everything we see in the course of Nature is as much an instance as any part of the Christian dispensation.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE PARTICULAR SYSTEM OF CHRISTIANITY; THE APPOINTMENT OF A MEDIATOR, AND THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD BY HIM.

[THE mediation of Christ has been greatly objected to, but without reason; for

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[21] [The reasonings of this chapter throw light on the proper method of studying the character and government of God. "Our philosophers," says Dr. Powell, . . . "make mistakes more shameful and dangerous when they judge of the Divine economy . . . from preconceived notions of fitness and propriety, of justice and impartiality, which they boldly apply to the Supreme Being. He cannot, they tell us, act in this manner, it would be contrary to his wisdom; nor in that, it would be inconsistent with his justice: one kind or degree of happiness he must be disposed to grant, and this his creatures have a right to demand. But while they throw out those peremptory assertions . . . they show themselves to be unacquainted with the fundamental rules of their own science, and with the origin of all its late improvements.. . . . True philosophy would have taught them to proceed the other way; to begin with observing the present constitution of the world; with considering attentively how God has made us, and in what circumstances placed us; and then to form a sure judgment, from what he has done, what it is agreeable to infinite wisdom and the other Divine perfections that he would do. They might thus have learned the invisible things of God from those things which are clearly seen; the things which are not yet accomplished from those which are."—*On the Use and Abuse of Philosophy in the Study of Religion. Powell's Discourses*, iii. These remarks are most applicable to the study of Scripture. "What readest thou?" ought to be the first question in theology, as "What findest thou?" is the first question in science. *A priori* presumptions become neither the spirit of the Baconian philosophy, nor the humility of the Christian. A sound philosophy is the result of the same process of *docile* inquiry as a sound faith.]

A The analogy of Nature supplies no presumption against the general notion of mediation, but the contrary:

For upon the instrumentality or mediation of others we depend for our birth and nature; for happiness and misery.

B The moral government of God, which mediation presupposes, and which religion tells us extends into another life, is natural.

1 Present punishment, one effect of moral government, is certainly natural, ever following vice; and, in the same way, future punishment may naturally follow vice.

2 Nor need any object that, upon this supposition, justice is taken out of God's hand, and given to Nature; for

a It is God who does what Nature is said to do; and

b In Scripture natural punishments are ascribed to God, and yet are deemed natural, as distinguished from miraculous; and

c By "natural" is meant, not arbitrary, but just and reasonable; such, moreover, as are in accordance with general laws.

C All the present penal consequences of vice are not always inflicted, but a provision is made to prevent them, and so may some of the future consequences be prevented.

1 Men may think that it would have been better for evil not to have existed; still it does exist, though God often provides remedies even for such evils as are penal.

2 Such provision might have been withheld; an arrangement severe, perhaps, but not unjust.

3 In fact, however, there is such a provision, and analogously we may hope that it will extend into the future, so that the consequences of vice may not follow universally in all cases.

4 Some may be surprised that this is stated as a supposition only But if the consequences of irregularities even (not vice) be so serious, and of vice often extreme misery and death, what may we not fear that the consequences of irreligion will be, looking at the disorder it introduces?

However, some of the future penal consequences of sin may be prevented.

D We have no reason, however, to suppose that these consequences can be prevented by anything we can do; for

1 We know not what reasons for punishment may exist, or what the natural consequences of vice are, and so cannot tell what can prevent them.

2 Nature, moreover, leads to the conclusion that we cannot prevent them; for ruin is often the consequence of vice, nor can repentance repair the evil. Our ability to repair it is often weakened; and, even if not, we have to depend on others.

Our notions of government are all against the supposition that repentance will prevent the future painful consequences of vice.

This conclusion is favoured by the general sense of mankind, who add sacrifices to their repentance.

The general doctrine of revelation on these questions confirms these views. It confirms our fears, and tells us of the future consequences of vice. It supposes a state of ruin (a supposition not contrary to reason); teaches us that we cannot be pardoned through repentance alone, yet affirms that pardon is possible, therein revealing God's goodness in preventing punishment and bestowing salvation through the suffering of another, all which is consistent with what we already know of God; and if any object

1 That this doctrine is inconsistent with goodness; answer, that even the supposition that the whole creation had perished would not be inconsistent with it, therefore much less is this. Or

2 That it presupposes a degraded state; answer,

a That Christianity does not put us into this state.

b That the fact we are in this state is confirmed by all experience (the best complain, and most grow worse with age); and

c How we are so, and why, may be difficult to explain; yet the Scripture account is analogous to much around us, and to our recovery by Christ.

These considerations show that mediation generally is analogous to what we see in Nature; nor can any valid objection be taken to the particular manner in which Christ interposed.

1 The doctrine of Scripture is in general, that Christ came to teach, and then to die for us. This last fact, *especially* set forth in the law, and clearly revealed in the gospel.

2 More particularly he appeared

a As a Prophet; teaching the law of Nature, purely, authoritatively, with new light, and adding many truths peculiar to himself, besides leaving us his own example.

b As King; ruling in his Church; the number of which he is about to perfect, and to receive to glory.

c As Priest; offering up himself a sacrifice, universal, efficacious, and final.

Men may ask how this sacrifice is availing. But this question is not answered; our conjectures are, therefore, uncertain. Scripture teaches that he makes repentance acceptable (*see* Note), and our wisdom is to accept the blessing without curiously inquiring how it effects its end.

6 Hence, since we are ignorant of much that mediation involves, objections against the scheme of mediation generally, and against the Scriptural scheme, are futile; whether against

1 The necessity of it.

2 The nature, parts, and duties of the Mediator's office, unless such objections are founded upon the unfitness of the means to the end proposed.

3 Of unfit means, the suffering of Christ, as innocent for guilty, is supposed to be an example; but the answer is obvious:

a In the constitution of Nature men thus suffer.

b Against that constitution the argument is still stronger, for Christ suffered *voluntarily*.

c In the end all (Christ included) will be treated according to their deserts.

d Such suffering is found, in fact, to contribute largely to the relief of man; and

e The reasonableness of the doctrine, and its fitness for the end, is seen in its natural tendency to vindicate God's laws, and deter men from sin.

f The objection, moreover, really means that it is not fit, because we do not see it to be so.

4 Such objections are all unreasonable, for they are based upon our ignorance; that is, the reason of the arrangement is not told us, and yet we object to it; they are most unreasonable, because, so far as we can judge, it is analogous to natural facts; besides, it is part of the doctrine in which we are not actively concerned; further

5 From Scripture and from analogy we learn that, while *our duty* is made clear, we are not to expect the same clearness in what Scripture tells us of the Divine conduct.

a In Nature we gather rules of life by experience. Of the vast scheme of Providence we know little; so,

b Analogously in Scripture, the things not understood relate to God's part, not to human duty. In both there is much we can understand; but our duties are always clear, whether moral or positive, and the reasons for them; and, even if they were not, the fact that they are commanded is sufficient to make them binding.]

There is not, I think, anything relating to Christianity which has been more objected against than the mediation of Christ, in some or other of its parts. Yet, upon thorough consideration, there seems nothing less justly liable to it. For,

I. The whole analogy of Nature removes all imagined presumption against the general notion of *a Mediator between God and man.*[1] For we find all living creatures are brought into the world, and their life in infancy is preserved, by the instrumentality of others: and every satisfaction of it, some way or other, is bestowed by the like means. So that the visible government, which God exercises over the world, is by the instrumentality and mediation of others. And how far his invisible government be or be not so, it is impossible to determine at all by reason. And the supposition that part of it is so appears, to say the least, altogether as credible as the contrary. There is then no sort of objection, from the light of Nature, against the general notion of a mediator between God and man, considered as a doctrine of Christianity, or as an appointment in this dispensation: since we find by experience that God does appoint mediators to be the instruments of good and evil to us; the instruments of his justice and his mercy. And the objection here referred to is urged, not against mediation in that high, eminent, and peculiar sense in which Christ is our mediator, but absolutely against the whole notion itself of a mediator at all. A

II. As we must suppose that the world is under the proper moral government of God, or in a state of religion, before we can enter into consideration of the revealed doctrine concerning the redemption of it by Christ, so that supposition is here to be distinctly taken notice of. Now the Divine moral government which religion teaches us implies, that the consequence of vice shall be misery, in some future state, by the righteous judgment of God. That such consequent punishment shall take effect by his appointment, is necessarily implied. But, as it is not in any sort to be supposed that we are made acquainted with all the ends or reasons, for which it is fit future punishments should be inflicted, or why God has appointed such and such consequent misery should follow vice; and as we are altogether in the dark how or in what manner it shall follow, by what immediate occasions, or by the instrumentality of what means; there is no absurdity in supposing it may follow in a way analogous to that, in which many miseries follow such and such courses of action at B 1

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

present; poverty, sickness, infamy, untimely death by diseases, death from the hands of civil justice. There is no absurdity in supposing future punishment may follow wickedness of course, as we speak, or in the way of natural consequence from God's original constitution of the world; from the nature he has given us, and from the condition in which he places us; or in a like manner as a person rashly trifling upon a precipice, in the way of natural consequence, falls down; in the way of natural consequence, breaks his limbs, suppose; in the way of natural consequence of this, without help perishes.

2 Some good men may perhaps be offended with hearing it spoken of as a supposable thing, that the future punishments of wickedness may be in the way of natural consequence: as if this were taking the execution of justice out of the hands of God, and giving it to Nature. But they should remember, that when things come to pass according to the course of Nature, this does not hinder them from being his doing, who
a is the God of Nature: and that the Scripture ascribes those punishments to Divine justice, which are known to be natural; and which must be called so, when distinguished from such
b as are miraculous. But after all, this supposition, or rather this way of speaking, is here made use of only by way of illustration of the subject before us. For since it must be admitted that the future punishment of wickedness is not a
c matter of arbitrary appointment, but of reason, equity and justice; it comes, for aught I see, to the same thing, whether it is supposed to be inflicted in a way analogous to that in which the temporal punishments of vice and folly are inflicted, or in any other way. And though there were a difference, it is allowable, in the present case, to make this supposition, plainly not an incredible one, that future punishment may follow wickedness in the way of natural consequence, or according to some general laws of government already established in the universe.

3 III. Upon this supposition, or even without it, we may observe somewhat much to the present purpose, in the constitution of Nature or appointments of Providence; the provision which is made, that all the bad natural consequences of men's actions should not always actually follow, or that such bad consequences, as according to the settled course of

things would inevitably have followed, if not prevented, should, in certain degrees, be prevented. We are apt pre- 1
sumptuously to imagine that the world might have been so constituted, as that there would not have been any such thing as misery or evil. On the contrary, we find the Author of Nature permits it: but then he has provided reliefs, and in many cases perfect remedies for it, after some pains and difficulties; reliefs and remedies even for that evil which is the fruit of our own misconduct, and which, in the course of Nature, would have continued and ended in our destruction but for such remedies. And this is an instance both of severity and of indulgence in the constitution of Nature. Thus all the bad consequences now mentioned of a man's trifling upon a precipice might be prevented. And though all were not, yet some of them might, by proper interposition, if not rejected: by another's coming to the rash man's relief, with his own laying hold on that relief, in such sort as the case required. Persons may do a great deal themselves towards preventing the bad consequences of their follies: and more may be done by themselves, together with the assistance of others their fellow-creatures; which assistance Nature requires and prompts us to. This is the general constitution of the world. Now suppose it had been so constituted, that after such actions were done as were foreseen naturally to draw after them misery to the doer, it should
have been no more in human power to have prevented that 2
naturally consequent misery, in any instance, than it is in all; no one can say whether such a more severe constitution of things might not yet have been really good. But that, on
the contrary, provision is made by Nature that we may and 3
do, to so great degree, prevent the bad natural effects of our follies, this may be called mercy or compassion in the original constitution of the world: compassion, as distinguished from goodness in general. And the whole known constitution and course of things affording us instances of such compassion, it would be according to the analogy of Nature, to hope that, however ruinous the natural consequences of vice might be, from the general laws of God's government over the universe, yet provision might be made, possibly might have been originally made, for preventing those ruinous con-

sequences from inevitably following; at least from following universally, and in all cases.

4 Many, I am sensible, will wonder at finding this made a question, or spoken of as in any degree doubtful. The generality of mankind are so far from having that awful sense of things, which the present state of vice and misery and darkness seems to make but reasonable, that they have scarce any apprehension or thought at all about this matter, any way; and some serious persons may have spoken unadvisedly concerning it. But let us observe what we experience to be, and what, from the very constitution of Nature, cannot but be the consequences of irregular and disorderly behaviour, even of such rashness, wilfulness, neglects, as we scarce call vicious. Now it is natural to apprehend that the bad consequences of irregularity will be greater in proportion as the irregularity is so. And there is no comparison between these irregularities and the greater instances of vice, or a dissolute profligate disregard to all religion, if there be anything at all in religion. For consider what it is for creatures, moral agents, presumptuously to introduce that confusion and misery into the kingdom of God, which mankind have in fact introduced; to blaspheme the Sovereign Lord of all; to contemn his authority; to be injurious to the degree they are to their fellow-creatures, the creatures of God. Add that the effects of vice in the present world are often extreme misery, irretrievable ruin, and even death; and upon putting all this together it will appear, that as no one can say in what degree fatal the unprevented consequences of vice may be, according to the general rule of Divine government; so it is by no means intuitively certain how far these consequences could possibly, in the nature of the thing, be prevented consistently with the eternal rule of right, or with what is, in fact, the moral constitution of Nature. However, there would be large ground to hope that the universal government was not so severely strict, but that there was room for pardon, or for having those penal consequences prevented. Yet,

D IV. There seems no probability that anything we could do would alone and of itself prevent them: prevent their following, or being inflicted. But one would think, at least,

it were impossible that the contrary should be thought
certain. For we are not acquainted with the whole of the
case. We are not informed of all the reasons, which render
it fit that future punishments should be inflicted: and 1
therefore cannot know, whether anything we could do
would make such an alteration, as to render it fit that they
should be remitted. We do not know what the whole
natural or appointed consequences of vice are; nor in what
way they would follow, if not prevented: and therefore can
in no sort say whether we could do anything which would
be sufficient to prevent them. Our ignorance being thus
manifest, let us recollect the analogy of Nature or Providence.
For, though this may be but a slight ground to raise a positive
opinion upon, in this matter; yet it is sufficient to answer
a mere arbitrary assertion, without any kind of evidence, 2
urged by way of objection against a doctrine, the proof of
which is not reason, but revelation. Consider then: people
ruin their fortunes by extravagance; they bring diseases
upon themselves by excess; they incur the penalties of civil
laws; and surely civil government is natural; will sorrow
for these follies past, and behaving well for the future, alone
and of itself prevent the natural consequences of them?
On the contrary, men's natural abilities of helping themselves
are often impaired: or if not, yet they are forced to be
beholden to the assistance of others, upon several accounts,
and in different ways; assistance which they would have had
no occasion for, had it not been for their misconduct; but
which, in the disadvantageous condition they have reduced
themselves to, is absolutely necessary to their recovery, and
retrieving their affairs. Now since this is our case, considering
ourselves merely as inhabitants of this world, and as
having a temporal interest here, under the natural government
of God, which however has a great deal moral in it;
why is it not supposable that this may be our case also, in
our more important capacity, as under his perfect moral
government, and having a more general and future interest
depending? If we have misbehaved in this higher capacity,
and rendered ourselves obnoxious to the future punishment,
which God has annexed to vice: it is plainly credible, that
behaving well for the time to come may be—not useless,
God forbid—but wholly insufficient, alone and of itself, to

prevent that punishment; or to put us in the condition, which we should have been in, had we preserved our innocence.

And though we ought to reason with all reverence, whenever we reason concerning the Divine conduct: yet it may be added, that it is clearly contrary to all our notions of
3 government, as well as to what is, in fact, the general constitution of Nature, to suppose, that doing well for the future should, in all cases, prevent all the judicial bad consequences of having done evil, or all the punishment annexed to disobedience. And we have manifestly nothing from whence to determine, in what degree, and in what cases, reformation would prevent this punishment, even supposing that it would in some. And though the efficacy of repentance itself alone, to prevent what mankind had rendered themselves obnoxious to, and recover what they had forfeited, is now insisted upon, in opposition to
4 Christianity; yet, by the general prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices over the heathen world, this notion, of repentance alone being sufficient to expiate guilt, appears to be contrary to the general sense of mankind.[2]

Upon the whole then; had the laws, the general laws of God's government been permitted to operate, without any interposition in our behalf, the future punishment, for aught we know to the contrary, or have any reason to think,

[2] [These remarks on the inadequacy of repentance, either as an emotion or as an act, to cancel sin, or efface the sense of guilt which remains after transgression, are expanded in Magee 'On the Atonement,' disc. 1, and in Howe's 'Living Temple,' part ii. They are in perfect harmony with Scripture, which represents forgiveness as the result, not of repentance, but of the death of Christ 'in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins'—repentance being essential, not to the efficacy of his death, but to the *appropriation* of the benefits secured by it.

Even if repentance, however, could save us, natural religion is unable to produce it. It is, in the evangelical true meaning of the term, such sorrow for sin as flows from a sense of the love and reverence due to God, and of the heinousness of sin against Him. The sorrow of the world is no such feeling. It is, on the contrary, blended with fears and impressions which make it impossible to love God or draw near to him.]

must inevitably have followed, notwithstanding anything we could have done to prevent it. Now,

V. In this darkness, or this light of Nature, call it which E
you please, revelation comes in, confirms every doubting fear which could enter into the heart of man, concerning the future unprevented consequence of wickedness; supposes the world to be in a state of ruin; (a supposition which seems the very ground of the Christian dispensation, and which, if not provable by reason, yet is in no wise contrary to it;) teaches us too, that the rules of Divine government are such, as not to admit of pardon immediately, and directly upon repentance, or by the sole efficacy of it: but then teaches, at the same time, what Nature might justly have hoped, that the moral government of the universe was not so rigid, but that there was room for an interposition, to avert the fatal consequences of vice; which therefore, by this means, does admit of pardon. Revelation teaches us, that the unknown laws of God's more general government, no less than the particular laws by which we experience he governs us at present, are compassionate[3], as well as good in the more general notion of goodness: and that he hath mercifully provided, that there should be an interposition to prevent the destruction of human kind; whatever that destruction unprevented would have been. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth*, not, to be sure, in a speculative, but in a practical sense, *that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish*[4]: gave his Son in the same way of goodness to the world, as he affords particular persons the friendly assistance of their fellow-creatures; when, without it, their temporal ruin would be the certain consequence of their follies: in the same way of goodness, I say; though in a transcendent and infinitely higher degree. And the Son of God *loved us and gave himself for us*, with a love, which he himself compares to that of human friendship: though, in this case, all comparisons must fall infinitely short of the thing intended to be illustrated by them. He interposed in such a manner as was necessary and effectual to prevent that execution of justice upon sinners, which God had appointed should otherwise have been executed upon them: or in such a manner, as to prevent that punishment

[3] P. 211, etc. [4] John iii. 16.

from actually following, which, according to the general laws of Divine government, must have followed the sins of the world, had it not been for such interposition[5].

9. If any thing here said should appear, upon first thought,
1 inconsistent with Divine goodness; a second, I am persuaded, will entirely remove that appearance. For were we to suppose the constitution of things to be such, as that the whole creation must have perished, had it not been for somewhat, which God had appointed should be, in order to prevent that ruin; even this supposition would not be inconsistent, in any degree, with the most absolutely perfect
2 goodness. But still it may be thought, that this whole manner of treating the subject before us supposes mankind to be naturally in a very strange state. And truly so it does. But it is not Christianity, which has put us into this state.[6]

[5] It cannot, I suppose, be imagined, even by the most cursory reader, that it is, in any sort, affirmed or implied in any thing said in this chapter, that none can have the benefit of the general redemption, but such as have the advantage of being made acquainted with it in the present life. But it may be needful to mention, that several questions, which have been brought into the subject before us, and determined, are not in the least entered into here: questions which have been, I fear, rashly determined, and perhaps with equal rashness contrary ways. For instance, whether God could have saved the world by other means than the death of Christ, consistently with the general laws of his government. And had not Christ come into the world, what would have been the future condition of the better sort of men; those just persons over the face of the earth, for whom, Manasses in his prayer asserts, repentance was not appointed. The meaning of the first of these questions is greatly ambiguous: and neither of them can properly be answered, without going upon that infinitely absurd supposition that we know the whole of the case. And perhaps the very inquiry, *What would have followed, if God had not done as he has,* may have in it some very great impropriety; and ought not to be carried on any further than is necessary to help our partial and inadequate conceptions of things.

[6] [This remark is of importance not only to Butler's argument, but on other grounds. The gospel defines the extent of actual transgression, and its results: Men "serve divers lusts and pleasures;" "the imaginations of the thoughts of their hearts are evil continually;" "they are alienated from the life of God;" they are

Whoever will consider the manifold miseries, and the extreme wickedness of the world; that the best have great wrongnesses within themselves, which they complain of, and endeavour to amend; but that the generality grow more profligate and corrupt with age; that heathen moralists thought the present state to be a state of punishment:[7] and what might be added, that the earth our habitation has the appearances of being a ruin:[8] whoever, I say, will consider all these, and some other obvious things, will think he has little reason to object against the Scripture a b

"children of wrath." It traces actual transgression, as no heathen system does, to a depraved nature. Men are "born in sin;" their hearts "are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And lastly it shows that this sinful condition does not originate with matter (as some of the Greeks held), or with God, or with any personal principle of evil, but with man himself. A just appreciation of these truths, especially of the last two, is essential to penitence. If men think that their hearts are *better* than their lives, and their ruined condition is rather their misfortune than their fault, repentance will be impossible; and the blame of sin will be thrown, with show of reason, anywhere but upon themselves. The importance of Christianity, in giving an account of the origin of evil, is well shown by Stillingfleet, 'Orig. Sacræ,' lib. 3, cap. 3, § 8; and especially by Halyburton on 'Natural Religion,' chap. ix.; see also Wilberforce's 'Practical View,' chap. iv.]

[7] [So Homer frequently. 'Herod. Clio,' 31, 32. 'Thucydides,' ii. 64, iii. 45. 'Aristotle's Rhet.,' ii. 13 and 15.]

[8] ["The stately ruins are visible to every eye that bear in their front (yet extant) this doleful inscription—Here God once dwelt. Enough appears of the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man to show the Divine presence did sometime reside in it; more than enough of vicious deformity to proclaim he is now retired and gone. The lamps are extinct, the altar overturned; the light and love are now vanished, which did the one shine with so heavenly brightness, the other burn with so pious fervour; the golden candlestick is displaced, and thrown away as a useless thing, to make room for the throne of the prince of darkness. . . . The comely order of this house is turned into confusion; the 'beauties of holiness' into noisome impurities; the 'house of prayer into a den of thieves,' and that of the worst and most horrid kind, for every lust is a thief, and every theft sacrilege,' etc.—*The Living Temple*, chap. iv.]

account, that mankind is in a state of degradation; against this being the fact: how difficult soever he may think it to account for, or even to form a distinct conception of the occasions and circumstances of it. But that the crime of our first parents was the occasion of our being placed in a more disadvantageous condition, is a thing throughout and particularly analogous to what we see in the daily course of natural Providence; as the recovery of the world by the interposition of Christ has been shown to be so in general.

VI. The particular manner in which Christ interposed in the redemption of the world, or his office as *Mediator* in the largest sense *between God and man*, is thus represented to us in the Scripture. *He is the light of the world;*[9] the revealer of the will of God in the most eminent sense. He is a propitiatory sacrifice;[10] *the Lamb of God*:[11] and as he voluntarily offered himself up, he is styled our High Priest.[12] And which seems of peculiar weight, he is described beforehand in the Old Testament, under the same characters of a priest, and an expiatory victim.[13] And whereas it is objected, that all this is merely by way of allusion to the sacrifices of the Mosaic law, the apostle on the contrary affirms, that the *law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things*:[14] and that *the priests that offer gifts according to the law——serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle. For see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount*:[15] *i. e.* the Levitical priesthood was a shadow of the priesthood of Christ; in like manner as the tabernacle made by Moses was according to that showed him in the mount. The priesthood of Christ, and the tabernacle in the mount, were the originals: of the former of which the Levitical priesthood was a type; and of the latter the tabernacle made by Moses was a copy. The doctrine of this epistle

9 John i. and viii. 12.

10 Rom. iii. 25, and v. 11; 1 Cor. v. 7; Eph. v. 2; 1 John ii. 2; Matt. xxvi. 28.

11 John i. 29, 36, and throughout the Book of Revelation.

12 Throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews.

13 Isa. liii.; Dan. ix. 24; Ps. cx. 4.

14 Heb. x. 1.

15 Heb. viii. 4, 5.

then plainly is, that the legal sacrifices were allusions to the great and final atonement to be made by the blood of Christ; and not that this was an allusion to those. Nor can anything be more express or determinate, than the following passage. *It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering, i. e.* of bulls and of goats, thou *wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me—Lo, I come to do thy will, O God—By which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*[16] And to add one passage more of the like kind: *Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin; i. e.* without bearing sin, as he did at his first coming, by being an offering for it; without having our *iniquities* again *laid upon him*, without being any more a sin offering:—*unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.*[17] Nor do the inspired writers at all confine themselves to this manner of speaking concerning the satisfaction of Christ; but declare an efficacy in what he did and suffered for us, additional to and beyond mere instruction, example, and government, in great variety of expression: *That Jesus should die for that nation*, the Jews: *and not for that nation only, but that also*, plainly by the efficacy of his death, *he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad*:[18] that *he suffered for sins, the just for the unjust*;[19] that *he gave his life, himself, a ransom*;[20] that *we are bought with a price*:[21] that *he redeemed us with his blood; redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us*:[22] that he is our *Advocate, Intercessor*, and *Propitiation*:[23] that *he was made perfect*, or consummate, *through sufferings: and being* thus *made perfect he became the author of salvation*:[24] that *God was in Christ reconciling the world*

[16] Heb. x. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10.
[17] [Heb.] ix. 28.
[18] John xi. 51, 52.
[19] 1 Pet. iii. 18.
[20] Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; 1 Tim. ii. 6.
[21] 2 Pet. ii. 1; Rev. xiv. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 20.
[22] 1 Pet. i. 19; Rev. v. 9; Gal. iii. 13.
[23] Heb. vii. 25; 1 John ii. 1, 2.
[24] Heb. ii. 10, and v. 9.

to himself; by the death of his Son, by the cross; not imputing their trespasses unto them:[25] and, lastly, that *through death he destroyed him that had the power of death.*[26] Christ then having thus *humbled himself, and become obedient to death, even the death of the cross; God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name: hath given all things into his hands: hath committed all judgments unto him; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.*[27] For *worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.*[28]

2 These passages of Scripture seem to comprehend and express the chief parts of Christ's office, as Mediator between God and man, so far, I mean, as the nature of this his office is revealed; and it is usually treated of by divines under three heads.

a First, He was by way of eminence, the Prophet; *that Prophet that should come into the world,*[29] to declare the Divine will. He published anew the law of Nature, which men had corrupted; and the very knowledge of which, to some degree, was lost among them. He taught mankind, taught us authoritatively, to *live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,* in expectation of the future judgment of God. He confirmed the truth of this moral system of Nature, and gave us additional evidence of it; the evidence of testimony.[30] He distinctly revealed the manner, in which God would be worshipped, the efficacy of repentance, and the rewards and punishments of a future life. Thus he was a prophet in a sense in which no other ever was. To which is to be added, that he set us a perfect *example that we should follow his steps.*

b Secondly, He has a *kingdom which is not of this world.* He

[25] 2 Cor. v. 19; Rom. v. 10; Eph. ii. 16.

[26] Heb. ii. 14. See also a remarkable passage in the book of Job, xxxiii. 24.

[27] Phil. ii. 8, 9; John iii. 35, and v. 22, 23.

[28] Rev. v. 12, 13.

[29] John vi. 14.

[30] Page 153, etc.

founded a church, to be to mankind a standing memorial of religion, and invitation to it, which he promised to be with always even to the end. He exercises an invisible government over it himself, and by his Spirit; over that part of it which is militant here on earth, a government of discipline, *for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying his body, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*[31] Of this church all persons scattered over the world, who live in obedience to his laws, are members. For these he is *gone to prepare a place*, and *will come again to receive them unto himself, that where he is there they may be also, and reign with him for ever and ever*;[32] and likewise *to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his gospel.*[33]

Against these parts of Christ's office I find no objections, but what are fully obviated in the beginning of this chapter.

Lastly, Christ offered himself a propitiatory sacrifice, and made atonement for the sins of the world, which is mentioned last in regard to what is objected against it. Sacrifices of expiation were commanded the Jews, and obtained amongst most other nations, from tradition, whose original probably was revelation. And they were continually repeated, both occasionally and at the returns of stated times; and made up great part of the external religion of mankind. *But now once in the end of the world Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*[34] And this sacrifice was, in the highest degree and with the most extensive influence, of that efficacy for obtaining pardon of sin, which the heathens may be supposed to have thought their sacrifices to have been, and which the Jewish sacrifices really were in some degree, and with regard to some persons.

How and in what particular way it had this efficacy there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain, but I do not find that the Scripture has explained it. We seem to be very much in the dark concerning the manner in which the ancients understood atonement to be made, *i. e.* pardon to be obtained by sacrifices. And if the Scripture

[31] Eph. iv. 12, 13.
[32] John xiv. 2, 3; Rev. iii. 21, and xi. 15.
[33] 2 Thess. i. 8. [34] Heb. ix. 26.

has, as surely it has, left this matter of the satisfaction of Christ mysterious, left somewhat in it unrevealed, all conjectures about it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet at least uncertain. Nor has any one reason to complain for want of farther information, unless he can show his claim to it.

Some have endeavoured to explain the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us, beyond what the Scripture has authorized; others, probably because they could not explain it, have been for taking it away, and confining his office as Redeemer of the world to his instruction, example, and government of the church.[25] Whereas the doc-

[25] [The statements of this paragraph must be received with caution. While, on the one hand, it becomes us not to attempt to be wise above what is written, it is important that we receive all that Scripture reveals. A belief of the fact that something—the death of Christ—has been appointed, to which we are to appeal as an adequate reason for the exercise of mercy, even though we are unable to perceive *how* it is efficient, is a most essential part of true religion. It may even be in some stages of religious knowledge the only faith possible; and in such cases men confide in the propriety and power of the reason, because God has appointed it, and he knows the necessities of our condition, and the requirements of his own law.

If this were all that Scripture told us, we should need simply to believe it; but it tells us more. As the aim of the gospel is to give us just views of the Divine government, and to influence men's hearts, it discloses enough of the reasons of the arrangement to secure these ends; and all it discloses must be believed. God is the ruler as well as the father of our race; he has, therefore, both official functions and a personal character. He is merciful, and he is just. In our salvation both parts of his character are to be harmonized—holiness and love; and so it *behoved* Christ to suffer, or God cannot be just and the justifier of those who believe. When our Lord appeared he first obeyed and so honoured the law which men had broken; he then exhausted the curse, which they had incurred, giving himself a ransom for them. The efficacy of his work depended partly upon his innocence, so that he bore our sins (not his own) upon the tree; and partly upon his inherent dignity, so that he voluntarily undertook a service he owed to none, humbling himself to become obedient unto death. Clearly in this arrangement the love of God originates a plan that satisfies his justice, maintains the law in its spirit, if not in its letter, and makes it possible to remit sin without doing violence to those

trine of the gospel appears to be, not only that he taught the efficacy of repentance, but rendered it of the efficacy which it is by what he did and suffered for us; that he obtained for us the benefit of having our repentance accepted unto eternal life; not only that he revealed to sinners that they were in a capacity of salvation, and how they might obtain it; but moreover that he put them into this capacity of salvation by what he did and suffered for them, put us into a capacity of escaping future punishment and obtaining future happiness. And it is our wisdom thankfully to accept the benefit, by performing the conditions upon which it is offered on our part, without disputing how it was procured on his. For,

VII. Since we neither know by what means punishment in a future state would have followed wickedness in this, nor in what manner it would have been inflicted had it not been prevented, nor all the reasons why its infliction would have been needful, nor the particular nature of that state of happiness which Christ is gone to prepare for his disciples; and since we are ignorant how far any thing which we could do would, alone and of itself, have been effectual to prevent that punishment to which we were obnoxious, and recover that happiness which we had forfeited, it is most evident we are not judges, antecedently to revelation, whether a mediator was or was not necessary to obtain those ends; to pre-

principles of equity which are essential to the maintenance of the Divine government. While upon the offenders themselves the arrangement produces, through the influence of the reasons of it, a deeper sense of the sinfulness of sin, of the excellence of law, the beauty of holiness, the love and righteousness of God, than is ever produced by other means. *All* the efficacy of the cross with man is not to be ascribed to those reasons, or the work of the Spirit would be unnecessary; but it is not difficult to *understand* how it should become the power of God to all who believe. With God, its efficacy depends in part on this appointment; yet even here we understand enough to regard the arrangement not as arbitrary, but as founded on attributes and principles which serve to vindicate the Divine law, and to endear the Divine character to holy and intelligent creatures. See Binney's 'Power of Faith,' sermons xii. and xiii., and Wilberforce's 'Practical View,' chap. iv. § 6.

1 vent that future punishment, and bring mankind to the
happiness of their nature. And for the very same reas
upon supposition of the necessity of a mediator, we ar
2 more judges, antecedently to revelation, of the whole na
of his office, or the several parts of which it consists
what was fit and requisite to be assigned him, in orde
accomplish the ends of Divine providence in the app
ment. And from hence it follows that to object agains
expediency or usefulness of particular things, reveale
have been done or suffered by him, because we do no
how they were conducive to those ends, is highly ab
Yet nothing is more common to be met with than this
surdity. But if it be acknowledged beforehand that w
not judges in the case, it is evident that no objection
with any shadow of reason, be urged against any parti
part of Christ's mediatorial office revealed in Scriptur
it can be shown positively not to be requisite or cond
to the ends proposed to be accomplished, or that is in
unreasonable.

3 And there is one objection made against the satisfa
of Christ, which looks to be of this positive kind; tha
doctrine of his being appointed to suffer for the sins
world, represents God as being indifferent whethe
punished the innocent or the guilty. Now from the
going observations we may see the extreme slightness
such objections; and (though it is most certain al
make them do not see the consequence) that they co
altogether as much against God's whole original consti
of Nature, and the whole daily course of Divine prov
in the government of the world, *i. e.* against the
scheme of Theism and the whole notion of religi
against Christianity. For the world is a constitut
system, whose parts have a mutual reference to each
and there is a scheme of things gradually carrying on,
the course of Nature, to the carrying on of which G
appointed us in various ways to contribute. And w
the daily course of natural providence, it is appointe
a innocent people should suffer for the faults of the guil
is liable to the very same objection as the instance
now considering. The infinitely greater importance
appointment of Christianity, which is objected agains

not hinder but it may be, as it plainly is, an appointment of the very same kind with what the world affords us daily examples of. Nay, if there were any force at all in the objection, it would be stronger in one respect against natural providence than against Christianity; because under the former we are in many cases commanded, and even necessitated whether we will or no, to suffer for the faults of others, whereas the sufferings of Christ were voluntary. The world's being under the righteous government of God does indeed imply, that finally and upon the whole every one shall receive according to his personal deserts; and the general doctrine of the whole Scripture is, that this shall be the completion of the Divine government. But during the progress, and, for aught we know, even in order to the completion of this moral scheme, vicarious punishments may be fit and absolutely necessary. Men by their follies run themselves into extreme distress, into difficulties which would be absolutely fatal to them were it not for the interposition and assistance of others. God commands by the law of Nature that we afford them this assistance, in many cases where we cannot do it without very great pains and labour, and sufferings to ourselves. And we see in what variety of ways one person's sufferings contribute to the relief of another; and how or by what particular means this comes to pass, or follows from the constitution and laws of Nature, which come under our notice; and, being familiarized to it, men are not shocked with it. So that the reason of their insisting upon objections of the foregoing kind against the satisfaction of Christ is, either that they do not consider God's settled and uniform appointments as his appointments at all, or else they forget that vicarious punishment is a providential appointment of every day's experience; and then, from their being unacquainted with the more general laws of Nature or Divine government over the world, and not seeing how the sufferings of Christ could contribute to the redemption of it, unless by arbitrary and tyrannical will; they conclude his sufferings could not contribute to it any other way. And yet what has been often alleged in justification of this doctrine, even from the apparent natural tendency of this method of our redemption, its tendency to vindicate the authority of God's laws, and deter his creatures from sin,

this has never yet been answered, and is, I think, plainly unanswerable; though I am far from thinking it an account of the whole of the case. But without taking this into consideration, it abundantly appears, from the observations above made, that this objection is not an objection against Christianity, but against the whole general constitution of Nature. And if it were to be considered as an objection against Christianity, or, considering it as it is, an objection against the constitution of Nature, it amounts to no more in conclusion than this, that a Divine appointment cannot be
f necessary or expedient, because the objector does not discern it be so; though he must own that the nature of the case is such, as renders him incapable of judging whether it be so or not, or of seeing it to be necessary, though it were so.

4 It is indeed a matter of great patience to reasonable men, to find people arguing in this manner; objecting against the credibility of such particular things revealed in Scripture, that they do not see the necessity or expediency of them. For though it is highly right, and the most pious exercise of our understanding, to inquire with due reverence into the ends and reasons of God's dispensations: yet when those reasons are concealed, to argue from our ignorance, that such dispensations cannot be from God, is infinitely absurd. The presumption of this kind of objections seems almost lost in the folly of them. And the folly of them is yet greater, when they are urged, as usually they are, against things in Christianity analogous or like to those natural dispensations of Providence, which are matter of experience. Let reason be kept to: and if any part of the Scripture account of the redemption of the world by Christ can be shown to be really contrary to it, let the Scripture, in the name of God, be given up; but let not such poor creatures as we go on objecting against an infinite scheme, that we do not see the necessity or usefulness of all its parts, and call this reasoning; and, which still further heightens the absurdity in the present case, parts which we are not actively concerned in. For it may be worth mentioning,

5 Lastly, That not only the reason of the thing, but the whole analogy of Nature, should teach us, not to expect to have the like information concerning the Divine conduct, as

concerning our own duty. God instructs us by experience, (for it is not reason, but experience which instructs us,) what good or bad consequences will follow from our acting in such and such manners: and by this he directs us, how we are to behave ourselves. But though we are sufficiently a instructed for the common purposes of life; yet it is but an almost infinitely small part of natural providence which we are at all let into. The case is the same with regard to revelation. The doctrine of a mediator between God and man, against which it is objected, that the expediency of b some things in it is not understood, relates only to what was done on God's part in the appointment, and on the Mediator's in the execution of it. For what is required of us in consequence of this gracious dispensation, is another subject, in which none can complain for want of information. The constitution of the world, and God's natural government over it, is all mystery, as much as the Christian dispensation. Yet under the first he has given men all things pertaining to life; and under the other, all things pertaining unto godliness. And it may be added, that there is nothing hard to be accounted for in any of the common precepts of Christianity: though if there were, surely a Divine command is abundantly sufficient to lay us under the strongest obligations to obedience. But the fact is, that the reasons of all the Christian precepts are evident. Positive institutions are manifestly necessary to keep up and propagate religion amongst mankind. And our duty to Christ, the internal and external worship of him; this part of the religion of the gospel, manifestly arises out of what he has done and suffered, his authority and dominion, and the relation which he is revealed to stand in to us[1].

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE WANT OF UNIVERSALITY IN REVELATION: AND OF THE SUPPOSED DEFICIENCY IN THE PROOF OF IT.

THE evidence of revelation is deficient, it is said, and so the revelation is not true. Revelation is not universal, it is said, and

[1] P. 159, etc.

therefore not true. These objections, which are made (it will be noticed) positive arguments against religion, are against both natural and revealed. Note—

A These objections are groundless, for they rest upon these two groundless suppositions;
  1 That God will not bestow favour upon us, except in that degree which we think most advantageous.
  2 That God will not bestow blessings upon some, except He bestow them upon all. Suppositions which the general analogy of Nature contradicts.

B These objections are answered by analogies in God's natural government.
  1 The evidence, it is said, is doubtful, because deficient. But so is the evidence
    a Of what constitutes our temporal interests; and
    b Of the best and surest means of attaining it.
  2 Revelation is not, it is said, universal. But so neither is the bestowal of natural gifts; which want of universality, however, is no argument against God's natural government, nor against the prudent management of our affairs under it. This evidence, and the partial bestowment of truth, illustrated in the successive ages of Judaism and Christianity; in the condition of the heathen and of Mahometans, and of those who live under a corrupt religious system, etc.; and the whole shown to be analogous to facts in Nature, and in the providence of God.

C This reasoning, defended by the fact, that every man will be treated according to his light and privileges; though this statement does not imply either
  1 That all men's religious condition is equally advantageous; or
  2 That we ought not, therefore, to improve our own condition, or that of others.

D What the reasons of this arrangement are, we cannot tell; but it may be said,
  1 Generally, that the same principle which disposed God to make various orders of creatures, and with various capacities, disposed Him to place creatures of the same order (and even the same creatures, at different periods), in different positions.
  2 More particularly, it is very difficult to give a reason; as may be seen from our own case. A system like ours, implies

    Things past and future, unknown to us, but possibly containing the explanation:

    It requires, too, variety; which may supply the reason.

And, at all events, the reason why we are placed in a state of ignorance, is probably also the reason, why the reason of our being in that state is not told us.

E That this arrangement is no ground of complaint, appears from the following facts:—

1 The deficiency of Christian evidence may be part of our intellectual probation, intended to exercise our minds virtuously in examining the evidence. Such exercise in intellectual matters, may as easily test our fairness and candour, as probation in practice.

2 It may be part of our general moral and religious probation, that it proves our character, thus:—

If religion is only supposably credible,

a Serious inquiry, and moral self-control, are made obligatory; and profanity, carelessness, and presumption, are thereby condemned: especially

b As our example will have influence with others; the reason being,

1 That doubt supposes SOME evidence; and

2 The lowest evidence ought to have some practical influence. The degree of that influence depends on the fairness and honesty of our character; the practical neglect of any evidence showing moral deficiency, just as the incapacity to discern it shows our intellectual deficiency.

3 It may constitute moral discipline and improvement; as do difficulties in practice, when the truth is believed.

Temptation of any kind (as to evidence, for example), exercises, and so proves, the moral principle,

a Teaching us not thoughtlessly to reject evidence, nor to conceal it, and to act virtuously, even though the results are uncertain; and

b What is thus exercised and proved is thereby strengthened. So that there is the same reason for deficient evidence, as for our trials; nor is it unlikely

c That with some (whose external temptations are small), these difficulties form the chief part of their discipline; as in common life some are tried, not by having to practise prudence, but by having to find out what prudence is.

F After all, though it is thus far supposed that the deficiency of the evidence of religion belongs to the evidence itself, it is possible that the deficiency may be owing to something in the objector; either

1 To his fault—want of earnestness in attention to evidence, etc., just as in practical matters; or

2 To his requiring more than a popular proof of Christianity, without applying the necessary examination or knowledge.

That evidence is level to the common understanding; but is liable to objections. Many *see* those objections, without giving time to *see through them*. Still the evidence, properly regarded, *or* thoroughly considered, is real and conclusive.

It may, indeed, be objected,

3 That, whatever the source of this deficiency, the evidence ought to be without doubt, as the directions of earthly masters are. To which, answer—

a That wherever the fallacy lies, there is fallacy; for in temporal affairs, God (our Master) does not give evidence free from doubt: moreover,

b Religion differs from all external commands. It seeks not external obedience simply, but the testing and exercise of our principles. That is best secured by commands less plain. Besides, God's will is conditional; ending in either obedience and reward, or vice and punishment.

G In conclusion, as religion implies probation, the probation may consist in the very things which are here made grounds of objection:

1 Judging from the reason of the thing, it seems that we may be tried by deficient evidence, as easily as by inattention or passion.

2 Judging from experience, we are as often tried by causes which produce doubts (imperfect information, etc.), as by inattention or passion.

3 Hence (to sceptics), it may be said, that scepticism may spring from want of solicitude, not from want of evidence; and that in daily life we act, where the probability is against success, and if only it is *possible* we may succeed.]

It has been thought by some persons, that if the evidence of revelation appears doubtful, this itself turns into a positive argument against it: because it cannot be supposed, that, if it were true, it would be left to subsist upon doubtful evidence. And the objection against revelation from its not being universal is often insisted upon as of great weight.

A Now the weakness of these opinions may be shown, by

observing the suppositions on which they are founded: which are really such as these; that it cannot be thought God would have bestowed any favour at all upon us, unless 1
in the degree, which, we think, he might, and which, we imagine, would be most to our particular advantage; and also that it cannot be thought he would bestow a favour 2
upon any, unless he bestowed the same upon all: suppositions, which we find contradicted, not by a few instances in God's natural government of the world, but by the general analogy of Nature together.

Persons who speak of the evidence of religion as doubtful, B
and of this supposed doubtfulness as a positive argument against it, should be put upon considering, what that evidence indeed is, which they act upon with regard to their temporal interests. For, it is not only extremely difficult, but 1
in many cases absolutely impossible, to balance pleasure and pain, satisfaction and uneasiness, so as to be able to say on which side the overplus is. There are the like difficulties 2
and impossibilities in making the due allowance for a change of temper and taste, for satiety, disgusts, ill health: any of which render men incapable of enjoying, after they have obtained what they most eagerly desired. Numberless too are the accidents, besides that one of untimely death, which may even probably disappoint the best-concerted schemes: and strong objections are often seen to lie against them, not to be removed or answered, but which seem overbalanced by reasons on the other side; so as that the certain difficulties and dangers of the pursuit are, by every one, thought justly disregarded, upon account of the appearing greater advantages in case of success, though there be but little probability of it. Lastly, every one observes our liableness, if we be not upon our guard, to be deceived by the falsehood of men, and the false appearances of things: and this danger must be greatly increased, if there be a strong bias within, suppose from indulged passion, to favour the deceit. Hence arises that great uncertainty and doubtfulness of proof, wherein our temporal interest really consists; what are the most probable means of attaining it; and whether 3
those means will eventually be successful. And numberless instances there are, in the daily course of life, in which all men think it reasonable to engage in pursuits, though the

probability is greatly against succeeding; and to make such provision for themselves, as it is supposable they may have occasion for, though the plain acknowledged probability is, that they never shall. Then those who think the objection against revelation, from its light not being universal, to be
5 of weight, should observe, that the Author of Nature, in numberless instances, bestows that upon some, which he does not upon others, who seem equally to stand in need of it. Indeed he appears to bestow all his gifts with the most promiscuous variety among creatures of the same species; health and strength, capacities of prudence and of knowledge, means of improvement, riches, and all external advantages. And as there are not any two men found, of exactly like shape and features, so it is probable there are not any two of an exactly like constitution, temper, and situation, with regard to the goods and evils of life. Yet notwithstanding these uncertainties and varieties, God does exercise a natural government over the world; and there is such a thing as a prudent and imprudent institution of life, with regard to our health and our affairs, under that his natural government.

As neither the Jewish nor Christian revelation has been universal; and as they have been afforded to a greater or less part of the world, at different times; so likewise at different times, both revelations have had different degrees of evidence. The Jews who lived during the succession of prophets, that is, from Moses till after the Captivity, had higher evidence of the truth of their religion, than those had, who lived in the interval between the last-mentioned period and the coming of Christ. And the first Christians had higher evidence of the miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, than what we have now. They had also a strong presumptive proof of the truth of it, perhaps of much greater force, in way of argument, than many think, of which we have very little remaining; I mean the presumptive proof of its truth, from the influence which it had upon the lives of the generality of its professors. And we, or future ages, may possibly have a proof of it, which they could not have, from the conformity between the prophetic history, and the state of the world and of Christianity. And further: if we were to suppose the evidence, which some have of religion, to amount to little more than seeing that it

may be true; but that they remain in great doubts and uncertainties about both its evidence and its nature, and great perplexities concerning the rule of life: others to have a full conviction of the truth of religion, with a distinct knowledge of their duty; and others severally to have all the intermediate degrees of religious light and evidence, which lie between these two—if we put the case, that for the present, it was intended, revelation should be no more than a small light, in the midst of a world greatly overspread, notwithstanding it, with ignorance and darkness; that certain glimmerings of this light should extend, and be directed, to remote distances, in such a manner as that those who really partook of it should not discern from whence it originally came: that some in a nearer situation to it should have its light obscured, and, in different ways and degrees, intercepted: and that others should be placed within its clearer influence, and be much more enlivened, cheered, and directed by it; but yet that even to these it should be no more than *a light shining in a dark place;* all this would be perfectly uniform, and of a piece with the conduct of Providence in the distribution of its other blessings. If the fact of the case really were, that some have received no light at all from the Scriptures; as many ages and countries in the heathen world: that others, though they have, by means of it, had essential or natural religion enforced upon their consciences, yet have never had the genuine Scripture-revelation, with its real evidence, proposed to their consideration; and the ancient Persians and modern Mahometans may possibly be instances of people in a situation somewhat like to this: that others, though they have had the Scripture laid before them as of Divine revelation, yet have had it with the system and evidence of Christianity so interpolated, the system so corrupted, the evidence so blended with false miracles, as to leave the mind in the utmost doubtfulness and uncertainty about the whole; which may be the state of some thoughtful men, in most of those nations who call themselves Christian: and lastly, that others have had Christianity offered to them in its genuine simplicity, and with its proper evidence, as persons in countries and churches of civil and of Christian liberty: but however that even these persons are left in great ignorance in many respects, and have by no

means light afforded them enough to satisfy their curiosity, but only to regulate their life, to teach them their duty, and encourage them in the careful discharge of it: I say, if we were to suppose this somewhat of a general true account of the degrees of moral and religious light and evidence, which were intended to be afforded mankind, and of what has actually been and is their situation, in their moral and religious capacity; there would be nothing in all this ignorance, doubtfulness, and uncertainty, in all these varieties, and supposed disadvantages of some in comparison of others, respecting religion, but may be paralleled by manifest analogies in the natural dispensations of Providence at present, and considering ourselves merely in our temporal capacity.

Nor is there anything shocking in all this, or which would seem to bear hard upon the moral administration in Nature, if we would really keep in mind, that every one shall be dealt equitably with: instead of forgetting this, or explaining it away, after it is acknowledged in words. All shadow of injustice, and indeed all harsh appearances, in this various economy of Providence, would be lost; if we would keep in mind, that every merciful allowance shall be made, and no more be required of any one, than what might have been equitably expected of him from the circumstances in which he was placed; and not what might have been expected, had he been placed in other circumstances: *i.e.* in Scripture language, that every man shall be *accepted according to what he had, not according to what he had not.*[1] This how-
1 ever doth not by any means imply, that all persons' condition here is equally advantageous with respect to futurity. And Providence's designing to place some in greater darkness
2 with respect to religious knowledge, is no more a reason why they should not endeavour to get out of that darkness, and others to bring them out of it; than why ignorant and slow people in matters of other knowledge should not endeavour to learn, or should not be instructed.

It is not unreasonable to suppose, that the same wise and good principle, whatever it was, which disposed the Author of Nature to make different kinds and orders of creatures, disposed him also to place creatures of like kinds in different situations: and that the same principle which disposed him to

[1] 2 Cor viii. 12.

make creatures of different moral capacities, disposed him also to place creatures of like moral capacities in different religious situations; and even the same creatures, in different periods of their being. And the account or reason of this is also most probably the account why the constitution of things is such, as that creatures of moral natures or capacities, for a considerable part of that duration in which they are living agents, are not at all subjects of morality and religion; but grow up to be so, and grow up to be so more and more, gradually from childhood to mature age.

What, in particular, is the account or reason of these things, we must be greatly in the dark, were it only that we know so very little even of our own case. Our present state may possibly be the consequence of somewhat past, which we are wholly ignorant of: as it has a reference to somewhat to come, of which we know scarce any more than is necessary for practice. A system or constitution, in its notion, implies variety: and so complicated an one as this world, very great variety. So that were revelation universal, yet, from men's different capacities of understanding, from the different lengths of their lives, their different educations and other external circumstances, and from their difference of temper and bodily constitution; their religious situations would be widely different, and the disadvantage of some in comparison of others, perhaps, altogether as much as at present. And the true account, whatever it be, why mankind, or such a part of mankind, are placed in this condition of ignorance, must be supposed also the true account of our further ignorance, in not knowing the reasons why, or whence it is, that they are placed in this condition. But the following practical reflections may deserve the serious consideration of those persons, who think the circumstances of mankind or their own, in the forementioned respects, a ground of complaint.

First, The evidence of religion not appearing obvious, may constitute one particular part of some men's trial in the religious sense: as it gives scope for a virtuous exercise, or vicious neglect, of their understanding, in examining or not examining into that evidence. There seems no possible reason to be given, why we may not be in a state of moral probation, with regard to the exercise of our understanding

pon the subject of religion, as we are with regard to our
chaviour in common affairs. The former is as much a thing
ithin our power and choice as the latter. And I suppose
is to be laid down for certain, that the same character, the
ame inward principle, which, after a man is convinced of
he truth of religion, renders him obedient to the precepts
f it, would, were he not thus convinced, set him about an
xamination of it, upon its system and evidence being offered
o his thoughts; and that in the latter state his examination
ould be with an impartiality, seriousness, and solicitude,
roportionable to what his obedience is in the former. And
s inattention, negligence, want of all serious concern, about
matter of such a nature and such importance, when offered
o men's consideration, is, before a distinct conviction of its
uth, as real immoral depravity and dissoluteness, as neglect
f religious practice after such conviction: so active solici-
ude about it, and fair impartial consideration of its evidence
efore such conviction, is as really an exercise of a morally
ght temper, as is religious practice after. Thus, that
eligion is not intuitively true, but a matter of deduction
nd inference; that a conviction of its truth is not forced
pon every one, but left to be, by some, collected with heed-
ul attention to premises; this as much constitutes religious
robation, as much affords sphere, scope, opportunity, for
ight and wrong behaviour, as anything whatever does. And
heir manner of treating this subject, when laid before them,
hows what is in their heart, and is an exertion of it.

Secondly, It appears to be a thing as evident, though it is
ot so much attended to, that if, upon consideration of reli-
ion, the evidence of it should seem to any persons doubt-
ul, in the highest supposable degree; even this doubtful
vidence will, however, put them into a general state of
robation in the moral and religious sense. For, suppose a
man to be really in doubt, whether such a person had not
one him the greatest favour; or, whether his whole tem-
oral interest did not depend upon that person: no one,
who had any sense of gratitude and of prudence, could pos-
ibly consider himself in the same situation, with regard to
uch person, as if he had no such doubt. In truth, it is as
ust to say, that certainty and doubt are the same; as to
ay, the situations now mentioned would leave a man as

entirely at liberty in point of gratitude or prudence, as he would be, were he certain he had received no favour from such person, or that he no way depended upon him. And thus, though the evidence of religion which is afforded to some men should be little more than that they are given to see, the system of Christianity, or religion in general, to be supposable and credible; this ought in all reason to beget a serious practical apprehension, that it may be true. And even this will afford matter of exercise for religious suspense and deliberation, for moral resolution and self-government because the apprehension that religion may be true does as really lay men under obligations, as a full conviction that it is true. It gives occasion and motives to consider further the important subject; to preserve attentively upon their minds a general implicit sense that they may be under Divine moral government, an awful solicitude about religion, whether natural or revealed. Such apprehension ought to turn men's eyes to every degree of new light which may be had, from whatever side it comes; and induce them to refrain, in the meantime, from all immoralities, and live in the conscientious practice of every common virtue. Especially are they bound to keep at the greatest distance from all dissolute profaneness; for this the very nature of the case forbids; and to treat with the highest reverence a matter, upon which their own whole interest and being, and the fate of Nature, depend. This behaviour, and an active endeavour to maintain within themselves this temper, is the business, the duty, and the wisdom of those persons, who complain of the doubtfulness of religion: is what they are under the most proper obligations to. And such behaviour is an exertion of, and has a tendency to improve in them, that character which the practice of all the several duties of religion, from a full conviction of its truth, is an exertion of, and has a tendency to improve in others: others, I say, to whom God has afforded such conviction. Nay, considering the infinite importance of religion, revealed as well as natural, I think it may be said in general, that whoever will weigh the matter thoroughly may see, there is not near so much difference, as is commonly imagined, between what ought in reason to be the rule of life, to those persons who are fully convinced of its truth, and to those who have only a serious doubting apprehension, that it may be true. Their

hopes, and fears, and obligations, will be in various degrees: but, as the subject-matter of their hopes and fears is the same, so the subject-matter of their obligations, what they are bound to do and to refrain from, is not so very unlike.

It is to be observed further, that, from a character of understanding, or a situation of influence in the world, some persons have it in their power to do infinitely more harm or good, by setting an example of profaneness and avowed disregard to all religion, or, on the contrary, of a serious, though perhaps doubting, apprehension of its truth, and of a reverend regard to it under this doubtfulness; than they can do, by acting well or ill in all the common intercourses amongst mankind. And consequently they are most highly accountable for a behaviour, which they may easily foresee, is of such importance, and in which there is most plainly a right and a wrong; even admitting the evidence of religion to be as doubtful as is pretended.

The ground of these observations, and that which renders them just and true, is, that doubting necessarily implies some degree of evidence for that, of which we doubt. For no person would be in doubt concerning the truth of a number of facts so and so circumstanced, which should accidentally come into his thoughts, and of which he had no evidence at all. And though in the case of an even chance, and where consequently we were in doubt, we should in common language say, that we had no evidence at all for either side, yet that situation of things, which renders it an even chance and no more, that such an event will happen, renders this case equivalent to all others, where there is such evidence on both sides of a question,[2] as leaves the mind in doubt concerning the truth. Indeed in all these cases, there is no more evidence on one side than on the other; but there is (what is equivalent to) much more for either, than for the truth of a number of facts which come into one's thoughts at random. And thus, in all these cases, doubt as much presupposes evidence, lower degrees of evidence, as belief presupposes higher, and certainty higher still. Any one who will a little attend to the nature of evidence, will easily carry this observation on, and see, that between no evidence at all, and that degree of it which affords ground of doubt, there are as many intermediate

[2] Introduction [p. 6].

degrees, as there are, between that degree which is the ground of doubt, and demonstration. And though we have not facilities to distinguish these degrees of evidence with any sort of exactness, yet, in proportion as they are discerned, they ought to influence our practice. For it is as real an imperfection in the moral character, not to be influenced in practice by a lower degree of evidence when discerned, as it is in the understanding, not to discern it. And as, in all subjects which men consider, they discern the lower as well as higher degrees of evidence, proportionably to their capacity of understanding; so in practical subjects, they are influenced in practice, by the lower as well as higher degrees of it, proportionably to their fairness and honesty. And as, in proportion to defects in the understanding, men are unapt to see lower degrees of evidence, are in danger of overlooking evidence when it is not glaring, and are easily imposed upon in such cases; so in proportion to the corruption of the heart, they seem capable of satisfying themselves with having no regard in practice to evidence acknowledged real, if it be not overbearing. From these things it must follow, that doubting concerning religion implies such a degree of evidence for it, as, joined with the consideration of its importance, unquestionably lays men, under the obligations before mentioned, to have a dutiful regard to it in all their behaviour.

Thirdly, The difficulties in which the evidence of religion is involved, which some complain of, is no more a just ground of complaint than the external circumstances of temptation, which others are placed in; or than difficulties in the practice of it, after a full conviction of its truth. Temptations render our state a more improving state of discipline,[a] than it would be otherwise: as they give occasion for a more attentive exercise of the virtuous principle which confirms and strengthens it more than an easier or less attentive exercise of it could. Now speculative difficulties are, in this respect, of the very same nature with these external temptations. For the evidence of religion not appearing obvious, is to some persons a temptation to reject it, without any consideration at all; and therefore requires such an attentive exercise of

[a] Part I. chap. v.

the virtuous principle, seriously to consider that evidence, as there would be no occasion for, but for such temptation. And the supposed doubtfulness of its evidence, after it has been in some sort considered, affords opportunity to an unfair mind of explaining away, and deceitfully hiding from itself that evidence which it might see; and also for men's encouraging themselves in vice, from hopes of impunity, though they do clearly see thus much at least, that these hopes are uncertain: in like manner as the common temptation to many instances of folly, which end in temporal infamy and ruin, is the ground for hope of not being detected, and of escaping with impunity; *i. e.*, the doubtfulness of the proof beforehand, that such foolish behaviour will thus end in infamy and ruin. On the contrary, supposed doubtfulness in the evidence of religion calls for a more careful and attentive exercise of the virtuous principle, in fairly yielding themselves up to the proper influence of any real evidence, though doubtful; and in practising conscientiously all virtue, though under some uncertainty, whether the government in the universe may not possibly be such, as that vice may escape with impunity. And in general, temptation, meaning by this word the lesser allurements to wrong and difficulties in the discharge of our duty, as well as the greater ones; temptation, I say, as such and of every kind and degree, as it calls forth some virtuous efforts, additional to what would otherwise have been wanting, cannot but be an additional discipline and improvement of virtue, as well as probation of it in the other senses of that word.[4] So that the very same account is to be given, why the evidence of religion should be left in such a manner, as to require, in some, an attentive, solicitous, perhaps painful exercise of their understanding about it; as why others should be placed in such circumstances, as that the practice of its common duties, after a full conviction of the truth of it, should require attention, solicitude, and pains: or, why appearing doubtfulness should be permitted to afford matter of temptation to some; as why external difficulties and allurements should be permitted to afford matter of temptation to others. The same account also is to be given, why some should be exercised with tempt-

[4] Part I. chap. iv., and p. 109, 110.

ations of both these kinds; as why others should be exercised with the latter in such very high degrees as some have been, particularly as the primitive Christians were.

Nor does there appear any absurdity in supposing, that the speculative difficulties in which the evidence of religion is involved, may make even the principal part of some persons' trial. For as the chief temptations of the generality of the world are the ordinary motives to injustice or unrestrained pleasure; or to live in the neglect of religion from that frame of mind which renders many persons almost without feeling as to anything distant, or which is not the object of their senses: so there are other persons without this shallowness of temper, persons of a deeper sense as to what is invisible and future; who not only see, but have a general practical feeling, that what is to come will be present, and that things are not less real for their not being the objects of sense; and who, from their natural constitution of body and of temper, and from their external condition, may have small temptations to behave ill, small difficulty in behaving well, in the common course of life. Now when these latter persons have a distinct full conviction of the truth of religion, without any possible doubts or difficulties, the practice of it is to them unavoidable, unless they will do a constant violence to their own minds; and religion is scarce any more a discipline to them, than it is to creatures in a state of perfection. Yet these persons may possibly stand in need of moral discipline and exercise in a higher degree, than they would have by such an easy practice of religion. Or it may be requisite, for reasons unknown to us, that they should give some further manifestation[5] what is their moral character to the creation of God, than such a practice of it would be. Thus in the great variety of religious situations in which men are placed, what constitutes, what chiefly and peculiarly constitutes, the probation, in all senses, of some persons, may be the difficulties in which the evidence of religion is involved; and their principal and distinguished trial may be, how they will behave under and with respect to these difficulties. Circumstances in men's situation in their temporal capacity, analogous in good measure to this respecting religion, are to be observed. We find some persons

[5] P. 110.

are placed in such a situation in the world, as that their chief difficulty with regard to conduct, is not the doing what is prudent when it is known; for this, in numberless cases, is as easy as the contrary: but to some the principal exercise is, recollection and being upon their guard against deceits, the deceits suppose of those about them; against false appearances of reason and prudence. To persons in some situations, the principal exercise with respect to conduct is, attention in order to inform themselves what is proper, what is really the reasonable and prudent part to act.

F But as I have hitherto gone upon supposition, that men's dissatisfaction with the evidence of religion is not owing to their neglects or prejudices; it must be added, on the other hand, in all common reason, and as what the truth of the case plainly requires should be added, that such dissatisfaction possibly may be owing to those, possibly may be men's own fault. For,

If there are any persons, who never set themselves heartily
1 and in earnest to be informed in religion; if there are any, who secretly wish it may not prove true; and are less attentive to evidence than to difficulties, and more to objections than to what is said in answer to them: these persons will scarce be thought in a likely way of seeing the evidence of religion, though it were most certainly true, and capable of being ever so fully proved. If any accustom themselves to consider this subject usually in the way of mirth and sport: if they attend to forms and representations, and inadequate manners of expression, instead of the real things intended by them: (for signs often can be no more than inadequately expressive of the things signified:) or if they substitute human errors in the room of Divine truth; why may not all, or any of these things, hinder some men from seeing that evidence, which really is seen by others; as a like turn of mind, with respect to matters of common speculation and practice, does, we find by experience, hinder them from attaining that knowledge and right understanding in matters of common speculation and practice, which more fair and attentive minds attain to? And the effect will be the same, whether their neglect of seriously considering the evidence of religion, and their indirect behaviour with regard to it, proceed from mere carelessness, or from the grosser vices; or whether it be

owing to this, that forms and figurative manners of expression, as well as errors, administer occasions of ridicule, when the things intended, and the truth itself, would not. Men may indulge a ludicrous turn so far as to lose all sense of conduct and prudence in worldly affairs, and even, as it seems, to impair their faculty of reason. And in general levity, carelessness, passion, and prejudice, *do* hinder us from being rightly informed, with respect to common things: and they *may*, in like manner, and perhaps in some further providential manner, with respect to moral and religious subjects: may hinder evidence from being laid before us, and from being seen when it is. The Scripture[6] does declare, that

[6] Dan. xii. 10. See also Is. xxix. 13, 14; Matt. vi. 23, and xi. 25, and xiii. 11, 12; John iii. 19, and v. 44; 1 Cor. ii. 14, and 2 Cor. iv. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 13; and that affectionate as well as authoritative admonition, so very many times inculcated, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* Grotius saw so strongly the thing intended in these and other passages of Scripture of the like sense, as to say, that the proof given us of Christianity was less than it might have been for this very purpose: *Ut ita sermo Evangelii tanquam lapis esset Lydius ad quem ingenia sanabilia explorarentur.* De Ver. R. C. lib. ii. towards the end. [The whole passage is worth quoting: "If there be any one who is not satisfied with the arguments hitherto alleged for the truth of the Christian religion, but desires more powerful ones, he ought to know that different things must have different kinds of proof; one sort in mathematics, another in the properties of bodies, another in doubtful matters, and another in matters of fact, and we are to abide by that the testimonies for which are free from suspicion. If this be not admitted, not only is the utility of all history lost, and much of medical science, but all the natural affection which is between parents and children, since these can be known in no other way. And it is the will of God that those things which he would have us believe, so that faith may be accepted as obedience, should not be so plain as what is perceived by our senses or by demonstration; but only so far as is sufficient to procure the belief of a man who is not obstinately bent against evidence; so that the gospel is as a touchstone whereby to test the honesty of men's dispositions." This notion is a favourite one with the Platonists: "A disposition to believe precedes all doctrines, especially if they be asserted, not by common, but by great and almost divine men."]

every one *shall not understand*. And it makes no difference, by what providential conduct this comes to pass: whether the evidence of Christianity was, originally and with design, put and left so, as that those who are desirous of evading moral obligations should not see it; and that honest-minded persons should: or, whether it comes to pass by any other means.

a Further: "The general proof of natural religion and of Christianity does, I think, lie level to common men; even those, the greatest part of whose time, from childhood to old age, is taken up with providing for themselves and their families the common conveniencies, perhaps necessaries, of life: those, I mean, of this rank, who ever think at all of asking after proof, or attending to it. Common men, were they as much in earnest about religion, as about their temporal affairs, are capable of being convinced upon real evidence, that there is a God who governs the world: and they feel themselves to be of a moral nature, and accountable creatures. And as Christianity entirely falls in with this their natural sense of things, so they are capable, not only of being persuaded, but of being made to see, that there is evidence of miracles wrought in attestation of it, and many appearing completions of prophecy. But though this proof is real and conclusive, yet it is liable to objections, and may be run up into difficulties; which, however, persons who are capable, not only of talking of, but of really seeing, are capable also of seeing through: *i. e.* not of clearing up and answering them, so as to satisfy their curiosity, for of such knowledge we are not capable with respect to any one thing in Nature; but capable of seeing that the proof is not lost in these difficulties, or destroyed by these objections. But then a thorough examination into religion with regard to these objections, which cannot be the business of every man, is a matter of pretty large compass, and, from the nature of it, requires some knowledge, as well as time and attention, to see, how the evidence comes out, upon balancing one thing with another, and what, upon the whole, is the amount of it. Now if persons who have picked up these objections from others, and take for granted they are of weight, upon the word of those from whom they received them, or by often retailing of them, come to see, or fancy they see them to be

of weight, will not prepare themselves for such an examination with a competent degree of knowledge; or will not give that time and attention to the subject, which, from the nature of it, is necessary for attaining such information: in this case, they must remain in doubtfulness, ignorance, or error; in the same way as they must, with regard to common sciences, and matters of common life, if they neglect the necessary means of being informed in them.

But still perhaps it will be objected, that if a prince or common master were to send directions to a servant, he would take care, that they should always bear the certain marks, whom they came from, and that their sense should be always plain: so as that there should be no possible doubt, if he could help it, concerning the authority or meaning of them. Now the proper answer to all this kind of objections a is, that, wherever the fallacy lies, it is even certain we cannot argue thus with respect to Him, who is the governor of the world: and particularly that he does not afford us such information, with respect to our temporal affairs and interests, as experience abundantly shows. However, there b is a full answer to this objection, from the very nature of religion. For, the reason why a prince would give his directions in this plain manner is, that he absolutely desires such an external action should be done, without concerning himself with the motive or principle upon which it is done: *i. e.* he regards only the external event or the thing's being done; and not at all, properly speaking, the doing of it, or the action. Whereas the whole of morality and religion consisting merely in action itself, there is no sort of parallel between the cases. But if the prince be supposed to regard only the action; *i. e.* only to desire to exercise, or in any sense prove, the understanding or loyalty of a servant; he would not always give his orders in such a plain manner. It may be proper to add, that the will of God, respecting morality and religion, may be considered either as absolute, or as only conditional. If it be absolute, it can only be thus, that we should act virtuously in such given circumstances; not that we should be brought to act so, by his changing of our circumstances. And if God's will be thus absolute, then it is in our power, in the highest and strictest sense, to do or to contradict his will; which is a most weighty con-

sideration. Or his will may be considered only as conditional, that if we act so and so, we shall be rewarded; if otherwise, punished: of which conditional will of the Author of Nature, the whole constitution of it affords most certain instances.

0 Upon the whole: that we are in a state of religion necessarily implies, that we are in a state of probation: and the credibility of our being at all in such a state being admitted, there seems no peculiar difficulty in supposing our probation to be, just as it is, in those respects which are above objected
1 against. There seems no pretence, from *the reason of the thing*, to say that the trial cannot equitably be any thing, but whether persons will act suitably to certain information, or such as admits no room for doubt; so as that there can be no danger of miscarriage, but either from their not attending to what they certainly know, or from overbearing passion hurrying them on to act contrary to it. For, since ignorance and doubt afford scope for probation in all senses, as really as intuitive conviction or certainty: and since the two former are to be put to the same account as difficulties in practice; men's moral probation may also be, whether they will take due care to inform themselves by impartial consideration, and afterwards whether they will act as the case requires, upon the evidence which they have, however
2 doubtful. And this we find, by *experience*, is frequently our probation[7] in our temporal capacity. For the information, which we want with regard to our worldly interests is by no means always given us of course, without any care of our own. And we are greatly liable to self-deceit from inward secret prejudices, and also to the deceit of others. So that to be able to judge what is the prudent part, often requires much and difficult consideration. Then after we have judged the very best we can, the evidence upon which we must act, if we will live and act at all, is perpetually doubtful to a very high degree. And the constitution and course of the world in fact is such, as that want of impartial consideration what we have to do, and venturing upon extravagant courses because it is doubtful what will be the consequence, are often naturally, *i. e.* providentially, altogether as fatal, as misconduct occasioned by heedless in-

[7] P. 44, 239, 241, 242.

attention to what we certainly know, or disregarding it from overbearing passion.

Several of the observations here made may well seem strange, perhaps unintelligible, to many good men. But if the persons for whose sake they are made think so—persons who object as above, and throw off all regard to religion under pretence of want of evidence—I desire them to consider again, whether their thinking so be owing to anything unintelligible in these observations, or to their own not having such a sense of religion and serious solicitude about it, as even their state of scepticism does in all reason 3 require? It ought to be forced upon the reflection of these persons, that our nature and condition necessarily require us, in the daily course of life, to act upon evidence much lower than what is commonly called probable; to guard, not only against what we fully believe will, but also against what we think it supposable may, happen; and to engage in pursuits when the probability is greatly against success, if it be credible, that possibly we may succeed in them.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE PARTICULAR EVIDENCE FOR CHRISTIANITY.[1]

[Having considered objections against any revelation, and against the Christian revelation particularly, consider now the positive evidence for Christianity, and the objections against that evidence; the whole divisible into two parts—(i.) The evidence from miracles and prophecy; (ii.) The direct and collateral evidence considered as making one argument.

i.

A On miracles as evidence for Christianity, note
 1 The Bible gives the same evidence for miraculous as for common history.
  a The narrative of miraculous and of common history is equally plain.

[1] [Butler now passes from the truths of Christianity to its evidence. He has met objections against Christianity, he now meets objections against the proof of it. In previous chapters he seeks to free the gospel from groundless objections, and so to leave it to the support of its proper evidence. In this chapter he frees the evidence itself from objections, and so leaves it with its proper force to support the gospel. On the writers referred to in this chapter, see p. ix.]

b The accounts of miracles are quoted as genuine.

c The accuracy of the account of miracles is attested by contemporaneous and by later events.

d And the most obvious explanation of the reception of this history is its truthfulness, so that

e It ought to be received till there is reason for rejecting it.

2 Paul's Epistles, which are proved genuine, are an additional and peculiar proof of the miracles of Christianity:

a Additional, because Paul received the gospel direct from God; and

b Peculiar, because he speaks of a great variety of miracles as wrought by himself and by others, and as admitted.

3 Christianity demands to be received for its miracles—a fact peculiar to it—and it was received at first on that ground.

a The demand is peculiar, for Mohammedanism was not founded upon miracles; and other systems, whether of popery or of paganism, were founded upon alleged miracles, only AFTER they had been instituted, and not BEFORE.

b In part Christianity was received on the ground of its miraculousness, a fact which, under the circumstances, proves the reality of those miracles, and is testimony for them, additional to the testimony of history.

CONCL. Hence there is large historical evidence in favour of Christianity which ought to be credited.

B The *objections* to this reasoning are obvious:

1 Under the influence of enthusiasm men lay down their lives for every kind of folly: Answer,

a Perhaps so, when the follies are matters of opinion; but here the thing attested, in the case of the first Christians, is fact, and for testimony to the reality of facts enthusiasm cannot account.

b And, if it be said that the evidence of *religious facts* is weakened by enthusiasm, answer,

1 Yes, if the facts are in themselves incredible, a thing not shown; and, besides,

2 Religious facts, as attested, are not more liable to the influence of enthusiasm than common facts are to other influences, party spirit, etc., which yet are believed.

2 A mixture of enthusiasm and knavery, it is objected, weakens the evidence for miracles.

That there is this mixture in human nature is certain, but it is seen also in common matters, which yet are believed on testimony

3 However, men have been themselves deluded by pretences to miracles.

Answer. Not more so than by other pretences, of honesty or benevolence, for example.

4 Fabulous miracles have historical evidence; yet,

Answer, Even if this be admitted, that would not prove the falsehood of Christian miracles, even though they furnish a precisely analogous example.

C Conclusions:—

1 From objections, note

a They weaken the evidence but cannot destroy it.

b Nor can that evidence be destroyed but by proof of the untrustworthiness of the witnesses.

c This very mode of speaking implies that there is *something* in the evidence itself; an important reflection on such a subject.

d It should be remembered that the importance of Christianity and its precepts on veracity must have made the early Christians peculiarly careful not to deceive or be deceived.

2 From the *whole argument* it is plain that the proof of miracles is of real weight and sufficient: and so men ought to admit it where there is nothing in religion itself incredible.

D On evidences from prophecy the following remarks are important:—

1 Not perceiving the *whole sense* of a prophecy does not weaken the proof of foresight, nor does the not understanding the whole fulfilment.

2 If a long series of prophecies be applicable to certain events, the applicability proves such an application is intended. This meets the objection, that the application of each prophecy apart may not be apparent, and so was not intended.

Note the analogous case of mythological or satirical writing; and mark, that Old Testament prophecy was understood by the Jews generally as it now is by Christians.

3 A prophecy may be completed in a sense different to the sense of the prophet, and a prophecy may seem applicable to other events than the alleged completion; but neither weakens the evidence, for

a The Scriptures are the work, not of the men who wrote them, but of the Spirit, and the former may not have known all the meaning.

b The applicability to more than one event may have been intended by the Spirit.

Concl. The conclusion is, that this evidence is real, though not perfect, and needs fairness and modesty in weighing it.

ii.

E On other direct and collateral evidence, note

1 *Introduction.* This evidence is peculiarly important, for

a It is what is commonly given us in practice; and

b Such evidence, being circumstantial, is, when taken together, of great weight, and

c Would, *if considered* simply *as matter of fact,* have great influence with unbelievers.

d It is intended then to prove that God has given us a system of natural religion and of revealed; the first ascertainable by reason, and the second not; the latter intended to secure our recovery and holiness.

2 Note what this religion is, as a real or supposed history.

a It teaches the creation of the world as God's world; reveals the Son as Creator.

b It teaches the history of religion in its various aspects.

c It teaches as much of politics as is needed to make the history of religion complete. On all which note 1, 2, 3, 4.

d It gives an account of the origin of mankind, and a thread of history extending over 4000 years, with many particulars which need to be carefully noted, and ending in the establishment of the Christian faith.

3 Let it be asked, "Is this true?" and take, as answer, the following facts; first separately, and then unitedly.

a Natural religion has owed its establishment in a large degree to the Scriptures, as many allow, so that Scripture has claims upon our natural piety. Nor must it be thought that the establishment of natural religion by revelation destroys the proof from reason.

b The first parts of Scripture are of acknowledged antiquity, and its history and chronology credible, both from

1 Common history, and

2 Internal evidence.

c The Jews, the peculiar people of God, owed most of their history to their religion, and preserved (and they alone) the truths of natural religion uncorrupted.

d A Messiah has appeared, fulfilling ancient prophecies, whose religion, sometimes above, but never contrary to reason, became the religion of the world; the Jewish polity in the

mean time destroyed, and the Jews scattered yet preserved; each part, and much more the whole, in fulfilment of prophecies, supplying fresh evidence.

Note further,

1 That, though the immediate facts may be explained on natural principles, the correspondence between these facts and predictions cannot, as in the case of the dispersion of the Jews and the birth of the Messiah.

2 There are to be added many prophecies still in course of fulfilment, the fulfilment of which is highly probable from the fulfilment of prophecy in the past.

e Let all this be considered apart and together, and then add other obvious examples of harmony between prophecy and facts.

F In conclusion, let it be remembered,

1 The force of this evidence depends on the whole taken unitedly, and must be admitted to have great weight.

2 Even as far as it has been here given, the evidence is more than human—miracles, prophecies, other proofs.

3 Those proofs, taken together, not only add to the evidence—they multiply it.

4 And, though proofs to the contrary may also be set down, yet in matters of conduct (not in case of events or of speculation) the question of which view is safer is important. A mistake on the one side, in rejecting Christianity, is more dangerous than a mistake on the other, in accepting it: and the more so, as,

5 Christianity is true, not only if one particular fact prove it, but unless all the things herein alleged can reasonably be supposed to be accidental.

6 There being no presumption against Christianity as miraculous, or against its scheme or parts, this evidence, though it may be lessened, cannot be destroyed.]

The presumptions against revelation, and objections against the general scheme of Christianity, and particular things relating to it, being removed; there remains to be considered, what positive evidence we have for the truth of it: chiefly in order to see, what the analogy of Nature suggests with regard to that evidence, and the objections against it: or to see what is, and is allowed to be, the plain natural rule of judgment and of action, in our temporal concerns, in cases where we have the same kind of evidence, and the INTRO

same kind of objections against it, that we have in the case before us.

Now in the evidence of Christianity there seem to be several things of great weight, not reducible to the head, either of miracles, or the completion of prophecy, in the common acceptation of the words. But these two are its direct and fundamental proofs: and those other things, however considerable they are, yet ought never to be urged apart from its direct proofs, but always to be joined with them. Thus the evidence of Christianity will be a long series of things, reaching as it seems, from the beginning of the world to the present time, of great variety and compass, taking in both the direct, and also the collateral, proofs; and making up, all of them together, one argument: the conviction arising from which kind of proof may be compared to what they call *the effect* in architecture or other works of art; a result from a great number of things so and so disposed, and taken into one view. I shall therefore,
i. first, make some observations relating to miracles, and the appearing completions of prophecy; and consider what analogy suggests, in answer to the objections brought against this evidence. And, secondly, I shall endeavour to give some account of the general argument now mentioned,
ii. consisting both of the direct and collateral evidence, considered as making up one argument: this being the kind of proof upon which we determine most questions, of difficulty, concerning common facts, alleged to have happened, or seeming likely to happen; especially questions relating to conduct.

I.

First, I shall make some observations upon the direct proof of Christianity from miracles and prophecy, and upon the objections alleged against it.

A I. Now the following observations relating to the historical evidence of miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, appear to be of great weight.

1 1. The Old Testament affords us the same historical evidence of the miracles of Moses and of the prophets, as of the common civil history of Moses and the kings of Israel;

or, as of the affairs of the Jewish nation. And the *Gospels* and *Acts* afford us the same historical evidence of the miracles of Christ and the apostles, as of the common matters related in them.[a] This indeed could not have been affirmed by any reasonable man, if the authors of these books, like many other historians, had appeared to make an entertaining manner of writing their aim; though they had interspersed miracles in their works, at proper distances and upon proper occasions. These might have animated a dull relation, amused the reader, and engaged his attention. And the same account would naturally have been given of them, as of the speeches and descriptions of such authors: the same account, in a manner, as is to be given, why the poets make use of wonders and prodigies. But the facts, both miraculous and natural, in Scripture, are related in plain unadorned a
narratives; and both of them appear, in all respects, to stand upon the same foot of historical evidence. Further: some parts of Scripture, containing an account of miracles fully sufficient to prove the truth of Christianity, are quoted as genuine, from the age in which they are said to be written, b
down to the present: and no other parts of them, material in the present question, are omitted to be quoted in such manner, as to afford any sort of proof of their not being genuine. And, as common history, when called in question in any instance, may often be greatly confirmed by contemporary or subsequent events more known and acknowledged; and as the common Scripture history, like many others, is thus confirmed; so likewise is the miraculous history of it, not only in particular instances, but in general. For the esta-

[a] [Lord Bolingbroke is quoted by Fitzgerald as making the same remark. "The miracles of the Bible are not like those of Livy, detached pieces that do not disturb the civil history, but are intimately connected with all the civil affairs, and make a necessary and inseparable part. The whole history is founded on them; it consists of little else; and if it were not a history of them it would be a history of nothing." This thought has been applied by the author of the 'Restoration of Belief' to the New Testament, and especially to the Epistles, in order to show that the miracles are all so interwoven with the truths of the gospel and the teaching of inspired men, that they cannot be denied without a denial of the whole Christian scheme.]

blishment of the Jewish and Christian religions, which were events contemporary with the miracles related to be wrought in attestation of both, or subsequent to them, these events are just what we should have expected, upon supposition such miracles were really wrought to attest the truth of these religions. These miracles are a satisfactory account of those events: of which no other satisfactory account can be given; nor any account at all, but what is imaginary merely, and invented. It is to be added, that the most obvious, the most easy and direct account of this history, how it came to be written and to be received in the world, as a true history, is, that it really is so; nor can any other account of it be easy and direct. Now, though an account, not at all obvious, but very far-fetched and indirect, may indeed be, and often is, the true account of a matter; yet it cannot be admitted on the authority of its being asserted. Mere guess, supposition, and possibility, when opposed to historical evidence, prove nothing, but that historical evidence is not demonstrative.

Now the just consequence from all this, I think, is, that the Scripture history in general is to be admitted as an authentic genuine history, till somewhat positive be alleged sufficient to invalidate it. But no man will deny the consequence to be, that it cannot be rejected, or thrown by as of no authority, till it can be proved to be of none; even though the evidence now mentioned for its authority were doubtful. This evidence may be confronted by historical evidence on the other side, if there be any: or general incredibility in the things related, or inconsistence in the general turn of the history, would prove it to be of no authority. But since, upon the face of the matter, upon a first and general view, the appearance is, that it is an authentic history; it cannot be determined to be fictitious without some proof that it is so. And the following observations in support of these, and coincident with them, will greatly confirm the historical evidence for the truth of Christianity.

2. The Epistles of St. Paul, from the nature of epistolary writing, and moreover from several of them being written, not to particular persons, but to churches, carry in them evidences of their being genuine, beyond what can be in a

mere historical narrative, left to the world at large.[3] This evidence, joined with that which they have in common with the rest of the New Testament, seems not to leave so much as any particular pretence for denying their genuineness, considered as an ordinary matter of fact, or of criticism: I say *particular* pretence, for *denying* it; because any single fact, of such a kind and such antiquity, may have *general doubts* raised concerning it, from the very nature of human affairs and human testimony. There is also to be mentioned a distinct and particular evidence of the genuineness of the epistle chiefly referred to here, the first to the Corinthians; from the manner in which it is quoted by Clemens Romanus, in an epistle of his own to that church.[4] Now these Epistles afford a proof of Christianity, detached from all others, which (a)
is, I think, a thing of weight; and also a proof of a nature (b)
and kind peculiar to itself. For,

In them the author declares, that he received the gospel a
in general, and the institution of the communion in particular, not from the rest of the apostles, or jointly together with them, but alone, from Christ himself, whom he declares likewise, conformably to the history in the Acts, that he saw after his ascension.[5] So that the testimony of St. Paul is to be considered, as detached from that of the rest of the apostles.

[3] [This hint has been improved and carried out in the case of Paul's Epistles by Paley in his 'Horæ Paulinæ:' in the case of the Acts and the Gospels as compared with each other and with the Epistles, in the 'Horæ Evangelicæ' and 'Horæ Apostolicæ' of Birks. A similar process of reasoning has been adopted by Graves and Blunt in proving the genuineness of the Pentateuch and of other parts of the Old Testament. Indeed, it is not sufficiently remembered that each of the inspired writers gives an independent testimony to the general accuracy of the rest. The Bible is properly a collection of books written under circumstances that left the writers independent, and made collusion impossible.]

[4] Clem. Rom. Ep. i. c. 47. ["Take the Epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle into your hands. What was it he wrote to you at his first preaching the gospel among you? Verily he did by the Spirit admonish you concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos, because that even then ye had begun to fall into parties and sections among yourselves," etc.—*Cave's Epistles of the Fathers.*]

[5] Gal. i.; 1 Cor. xi. 23, etc.; 1 Cor. xv. 8.

And he declares further, that he was endued with a power
b of working miracles, as what was publicly known to those
very people, speaks of frequent and great variety of miraculous
gifts as then subsisting in those very churches, to
which he was writing; which he was reproving for several
irregularities; and where he had personal opposers: he
mentions these gifts incidentally, in the most easy manner,
and without effort; by way of reproof to those who had
them, for their indecent use of them; and by way of depreciating
them, in comparison of moral virtues: in short he
speaks to these churches, of these miraculous powers,
in the manner any one would speak to another of a thing,
which was as familiar and as much known in common to
them both, as anything in the world.[6] And this, as hath
been observed by several persons, is surely a very considerable
thing.

3 3. It is an acknowledged historical fact, that Christianity
offered itself to the world, and demanded to be received,
(a) upon the allegation, *i. e.* as unbelievers would speak, upon
the pretence, of miracles, publicly wrought to attest the
(b) truth of it, in such an age; and that it was actually received
by great numbers in that very age, and upon the professed
belief of the reality of these miracles. And Christianity,
a including the dispensation of the Old Testament, seems distinguished
by this from all other religions. I mean, that this
does not appear to be the case with regard to any other:
for surely it will not be supposed to lie upon any person,
to prove by positive historical evidence, that it was not. It
does in no sort appear that Mohammedanism was first received
in the world upon the foot of supposed miracles,[7] *i. e.* public
ones: for, as revelation is itself miraculous, all pretence to
it must necessarily imply some pretence of miracles. And it

[6] Rom. xv. 19; 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10—28, etc., and xiii. 1, 2, 8, and the whole xivth chapter; 2 Cor. xii. 12, 13; Gal. iii. 2, 5.

[7] See the Koran, c. xiii. and c. xvii. ["The infidels say, unless a sign be sent down unto him from the Lord, we will not believe; thou art a preacher only." . . . "Nothing hindered us from sending thee with miracles, except that the former nations have charged them with imposture." Sale's *Trans.* Alleged pagan miracles are examined by Paley in his 'Evidences,' sec. iii.; and more satisfactorily by Campbell, pt. ii. sec. iv.]

is a known fact, that it was immediately, at the very first, propagated by other means. And as particular institutions, whether in paganism or popery, said to be confirmed by miracles after those institutions had obtained, are not to the purpose: so, were there what might be called historical proof, that any of them were introduced by a supposed Divine command, believed to be attested by miracles; these would not be in any wise parallel. For single things of this sort are easy to be accounted for, after parties are formed, and have power in their hands; and the leaders of them are in veneration with the multitude; and political interests are blended with religious claims, and religious distinctions. But before any thing of this kind, for a few persons, and those of the lowest rank, all at once, to bring over such great numbers to a new religion, and get it to be received upon the particular evidence of miracles; this is quite another thing. And I think it will be allowed by any fair adversary, that the fact now mentioned, taking in all the circumstances of it, is peculiar to the Christian religion.[8] However, the

[8] [This fact, that Christianity is the only religion founded on miracles, is insisted upon by Whately ('Christian Evidences'); and is of importance. It helps to get rid of the question, whether miracles are of themselves a conclusive evidence of the divinity of the doctrines they attest. Whether true miracles have ever been wrought in defence of error, as Farmer and others deny, or whether miracles must be themselves tested by the doctrines they support or illustrate, as others affirm, are comparatively unimportant points. . . . In fact, it seems that no religious system claiming our belief is founded on miracles but Christianity.

Though, however, miracles are always evidence of *supernatural*, and probably of *Divine* power, justice is not done to Christianity, unless we connect the miracles of our Lord and his apostles with the great truths they illustrated. Those miracles not only sounded the great bell of the universe—as John Foster phrases it—to call attention, and gave proof of a Divine presence, with the right of adding to previous revelations, they also set forth in a most remarkable way the design of the gospel. They reveal Christ's power over nature, and man, and devils; they show his authority in heaven, on earth, and in hell; they illustrate everywhere his benevolence; they teach that he came to "overthrow a usurpation," and drive the tyrant from the territory he has invaded; while the last, our Lord's resurrection, is a proof of the completeness of his work and

fact itself is allowed, that Christianity obtained, *i. e.* was professed to be received in the world, upon the belief of miracles, immediately in the age in which it is said those miracles were wrought: or that this is what its first converts would have alleged, as the reason for their embracing it. Now certainly it is not to be supposed, that such numbers of men, in the most distant parts of the world, should forsake the religion of their country, in which they had been educated; separate themselves from their friends, particularly in their festival shows and solemnities, to which b the common people are so greatly addicted, and which were of a nature to engage them much more than any thing of that sort amongst us; and embrace a religion, which could not but expose them to many inconveniences, and indeed must have been a giving up the world in a great degree, even from the very first, and before the empire engaged in form against them: it cannot be supposed, that such numbers should make so great, and, to say the least, so inconvenient a change in their whole institution of life, unless they were really convinced of the truth of those miracles, upon the knowledge or belief of which they professed to make it. And it will, I suppose, readily be acknowledged, that the generality of the first converts to Christianity must have believed them: that as by becoming Christians they declared to the world, they were satisfied of the truth of those miracles; so this declaration was to be credited. And this their testimony is the same kind of evidence for those miracles, as if they had put it in writing, and these writings had come down to us. And it is real evidence, because it is of facts, which they had capacity and full opportunity to inform themselves of. It is also distinct from the direct or express historical evidence, though it is of the same kind: and it would be allowed to be distinct in all cases. For were a fact expressly related by one or more ancient historians, and disputed in after ages; that this fact is acknow-

a pledge of the eternal life he came to reveal. Christ's miracles, in fact, preach parts of the gospel as clearly, as emphatically, as suggestively, to those who carefully study them, as the Epistles of Paul; and the doctrines taught in them form an essential portion of their evidence. See Orig. con. Cel. 1.]

ledged to have been believed by great numbers of the age in which the historian says it was done, would be allowed an additional proof of such fact, quite distinct from the express testimony of the historian. The credulity of mankind is acknowledged: and the suspicions of mankind ought to be acknowledged too; and their backwardness even to believe, and greater still to practise, what makes against their interest.[9] And it must particularly be remembered, that education, and prejudice, and authority, were against Christianity, in the age I am speaking of. So that the immediate conversion of such numbers is a real presumption of somewhat more than human in this matter: I say presumption, for it is not alleged as a proof alone and by itself. Nor need any one of the things mentioned in this chapter be considered as a proof by itself: and yet all of them together may be one of the strongest.[10]

Upon the whole: as there is large historical evidence, both direct and circumstantial, of miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, collected by those who have written upon the subject; it lies upon unbelievers to show why this evidence is not to be credited. This way of speaking is, I think, just; and what persons who write in defence of religion naturally fall into. Yet, in a matter of such unspeakable importance, the proper question is, not whom it lies upon, according to the rules of argument, to maintain or confute objections: but whether there really Conc

[9] [So one of the early apologists reasons—"Who are they, perhaps you ask—(he is addressing the heathen, and appealing to the example of the first Christians)—tribes, people, nations, the incredulous human race? Had not the thing been public, and in some sort clearer than the light, they would never have given their assent to claims of this nature. Shall we say that the men of those times were inconsiderate, deceitful, stupid, brutish enough to feign having seen what they never saw? and that when they might have lived with you in harmony and amicable union, they chose gratuitous hatred, and to bear an execrable name? . . . Truly, it was because they saw all these things done by Christ and by his heralds, that multitudes, conquered by the force of truth itself, gave themselves to God, nor thought it too great a cost to surrender themselves to you for torture and for death."—*Arnobius*, lib. i., quoted by Stillingfleet, 'Orig. Sac.,' p. 311—12.]

[10] Page 285, etc.

are any, against this evidence, sufficient, in reason, to destroy the credit of it. However, unbelievers seem to take upon them the part of showing that there are.

B They allege, that numberless enthusiastic people, in dif-
1 ferent ages and countries, expose themselves to the same difficulties which the primitive Christians did; and are ready to give up their lives for the most idle follies imaginable. But it is not very clear, to what purpose this objection is brought. For every one, surely, in every case, must distinguish between opinions and facts. And though testi-
a mony is no proof of enthusiastic opinions, or of any opinions at all; yet it is allowed, in all other cases, to be a proof of facts. And a person's laying down his life in attestation of facts or of opinions is the strongest proof of his believing them. And if the apostles and their contemporaries did believe the facts, in attestation of which they exposed themselves to sufferings and death; this their belief, or rather knowledge, must be a proof of those facts: for they were such as came under the observation of their senses. And though it is not of equal weight, yet it is of weight, that the martyrs of the next age, notwithstanding they were not eyewitnesses of those facts, as were the apostles and their contemporaries, had, however, full opportunity to inform themselves whether they were true or not, and gave equal proof of their believing them to be true.

b But enthusiasm, it is said, greatly weakens the evidence of testimony even for facts, in matters relating to religion; some seem to think it totally and absolutely destroys the evidence of testimony upon this subject. And indeed the powers of enthusiasm, and of diseases too, which operate in a like manner, are very wonderful in particular instances. But if great numbers of men, not appearing in any peculiar degree weak, nor under any peculiar suspicion of negligence, affirm that they saw and heard such things plainly with their eyes and their ears, and are admitted to be in earnest; such testimony is evidence of the strongest kind
1 we can have, for any matter of fact. Yet possibly it may be overcome, strong as it is, by incredibility in the things thus attested, or by contrary testimony. And in an instance where one thought it was so overcome, it might be just to consider, how far such evidence could be accounted for by

enthusiasm; for it seems as if no other imaginable account
were to be given of it. But till such incredibility be shown,
or contrary testimony produced, it cannot surely be ex-
pected, that so far-fetched, so indirect and wonderful an
account of such testimony, as that of enthusiasm must be;
an account so strange, that the generality of mankind can
scarce be made to understand what is meant by it: it can-
not, I say, be expected, that such account will be admitted
of such evidence; when there is this direct, easy, and
obvious account of it, that people really saw and heard
a thing not incredible, which they affirm sincerely and with
full assurance, they did see and hear. Granting then that
enthusiasm is not (strictly speaking) an absurd, but a pos-
sible account of such testimony; it is manifest, that the
very mention of it goes upon the previous supposition that
the things so attested are incredible: and therefore need
not be considered, till they are shown to be so. Much less
need it be considered, after the contrary has been proved.
And I think it has been proved, to full satisfaction, that
there is no incredibility in a revelation, in general; or in
such an one as the Christian, in particular. However, as 1
religion is supposed peculiarly liable to enthusiasm, it may
just be observed that prejudices almost without number and
without name, romance, affection, humour, a desire to
engage attention, or to surprise, the party-spirit, custom,
little competitions, unaccountable likings and dislikings;
these influence men strongly in common matters. And as
these prejudices are often scarce known or reflected upon by
the persons themselves who are influenced by them, they
are to be considered as influences of a like kind to enthu-
siasm. Yet human testimony in common matters is natur-
ally and justly believed notwithstanding.

It is intimated further, in a more refined way of observ- 2
ation, that though it should be proved, that the apostles
and first Christians could not, in some respects, be deceived
themselves, and, in other respects, cannot be thought to
have intended to impose upon the world; yet it will not
follow, that their general testimony is to be believed, though
truly handed down to us: because they might still in part,
i. e. in other respects, be deceived themselves, and in part
also designedly impose upon others; which, it is added, is

a thing very credible, from that mixture of real enthusiasm, and real knavery, to be met with in the same characters. And, I must confess, I think the matter of fact contained in this observation upon mankind is not to be denied; and that somewhat very much akin to it is often supposed in Scripture as a very common case, and most severely reproved.[11] But it were to have been expected, that persons capable of applying this observation as applied in the objection, might also frequently have met with the like mixed character, in instances where religion was quite out of the case. The thing plainly is, that mankind are naturally endowed with reason, or a capacity of distinguishing between truth and falsehood; and as naturally they are endued with veracity, or a regard to truth in what they say: but from many occasions they are liable to be prejudiced and biassed and deceived themselves, and capable of intending to deceive others, in every different degree: insomuch that as we are all liable to be deceived by prejudice, so likewise it seems to be not an uncommon thing, for persons, who, from their regard to truth, would not invent a lie entirely without any foundation at all, to propagate it with heightening circumstances, after it is once invented and set agoing. And others, though they would not *propagate* a lie, yet, which is a lower degree of falsehood, will let it pass without contradiction. But, notwithstanding all this, human testimony remains still a natural ground of assent; and this assent a natural principle of action.

3 It is objected further, that however it has happened, the *fact* is, that mankind have, in different ages, been strangely deluded with pretences to miracles and wonders. But it is by no means to be admitted, that they have been oftener, or are at all more liable to be, deceived by these pretences, than by others.

4 It is added, that there is a very considerable degree of historical evidence for miracles, which are, on all hands, acknowledged to be fabulous. But suppose there were even *the like* historical evidence for these, to what there is for those alleged in proof of Christianity, which yet is in nowise

[11] [See Butler's Sermons on Balaam and Self-deceit, and Warburton's 'Divine Legation,' viii. §. vi. Fitzg.]

ppose this; the consequence would not be,
ce of the latter is not to be admitted. Nor
in the world, who, in common cases, would
For what would such a conclusion really
; this, that evidence, confuted by contrary
y way overbalanced, destroys the credibility
nce, neither confuted, nor overbalanced? To
ause there is, if there were, like evidence from
miracles acknowledged false, as for those in
Christianity, therefore the evidence in the
ot to be credited; this is the same as to argue,
nen of equally good reputation had given
fferent cases no way connected, and one of
. convicted of perjury, this confuted the testi-
her.

whole, then, the general observation, that
res are so liable to be deceived, from enthu-
on, and principles equivalent to enthusiasm in
ers, and in both from negligence; and that
pable of dishonestly endeavouring to deceive
oes indeed weaken the evidence of testimony
but does not destroy it in any. And these
pear, to different men, to weaken the evidence
in different degrees: in degrees proportionable
tions they have made, or the notions they have
n up, concerning the weakness and negligence
ty of mankind; or concerning the powers of
nd prejudices equivalent to it. But it seems to
le do not know what they say, who affirm
to destroy the evidence from testimony, which
e truth of Christianity. Nothing can destroy
of testimony in any case, but a proof or
hat persons are not competent judges of the
h they give testimony; or that they are actually
ndirect influence in giving it, in such particular
his be made out, the *natural* laws of human
ire, that testimony be admitted. It can never
to overthrow direct historical evidence, inde-
, that there are so many principles, from whence
le to be deceived themselves, and disposed to

deceive others, especially in matters of religion, that one
knows not what to believe. And it is surprising persons
can help reflecting, that this very manner of speaking
c supposes they are not satisfied that there is nothing in
the evidence, of which they speak thus; or that they can
avoid observing, if they do make this reflection, that it is,
on such a subject, a very material one.[12]

And over against all these objections is to be set the
importance of Christianity, as what must have engaged the
attention of its first converts, so as to have rendered them
less liable to be deceived from carelessness, than they would
d in common matters; and likewise the strong obligations to
veracity, which their religion laid them under: so that
the first and most obvious presumption is, that they could
not be deceived themselves, nor would deceive others. And
this presumption, in this degree, is peculiar to the testimony
we have been considering.

In argument, assertions are nothing in themselves, and
have an air of positiveness, which sometimes is not very
easy; yet they are necessary, and necessary to be repeated;
in order to connect a discourse, and distinctly to lay before
2 the view of the reader what is proposed to be proved, and
what is left as proved. Now the conclusion from the
foregoing observations is, I think, beyond all doubt, this:
that unbelievers must be forced to admit the external
evidence for Christianity, *i. e.* the proof of miracles wrought
to attest it, to be of real weight and very considerable;
though they cannot allow it to be sufficient to convince
them of the reality of those miracles. And as they must, in
all reason, admit this; so it seems to me, that upon consideration they would, in fact, admit it; those of them, I
mean, who know anything at all of the matter: in like
manner as persons, in many cases, own they see strong
evidence from testimony for the truth of things, which yet
they cannot be convinced are true: cases, suppose, where
there is contrary testimony; or things which they think,
whether with or without reason, to be incredible. But there
is no testimony contrary to that which we have been consi

[12] See the foregoing chapter.

dering: and it has been fully proved, that there is no incredibility in Christianity in general, or in any part of it.

II. As to the evidence of Christianity from prophecy, D
I shall only make some few general observations, which are suggested by the analogy of Nature; *i. e.* by the acknowledged natural rules of judging in common matters, concerning evidence of a like kind to this from prophecy.

1. The obscurity or unintelligibleness of one part of a 1
prophecy does not, in any degree, invalidate the proof of foresight, arising from the appearing completion of those other parts which are understood. For the case is evidently the same, as if those parts which are not understood were lost, or not written at all, or written in an unknown tongue. Whether this observation be commonly attended to or not, it is so evident, that one can scarce bring oneself to set down an instance in common matters to exemplify it. However, suppose a writing, partly in cipher and partly in plain words at length; and that in the part one understood, there appeared mention of several known facts; it would never come into any man's thoughts to imagine, that if he understood the whole, perhaps he might find, that those facts were not in reality known by the writer. Indeed, both in this example, and the thing intended to be exemplified by it, our not understanding the whole (the whole, suppose, of a sentence or a paragraph) might sometimes occasion a doubt, whether one understood the literal meaning of such a part: but this comes under another consideration.

For the same reason, though a man should be incapable, for want of learning, or opportunities of inquiry, or from not having turned his studies this way, even so much as to judge, whether particular prophecies have been throughout completely fulfilled; yet he may see, in general, that they have been fulfilled to such a degree, as, upon very good ground, to be convinced of foresight more than human in such prophecies, and of such events being intended by them. For the same reason also, though by means of the deficiencies in civil history, and the different accounts of historians, the most learned should not be able to make out to satisfaction, that such parts of the prophetic history have been minutely and throughout fulfilled; yet a very strong

proof of foresight may arise, from that general completion of them, which is made out: as much proof of foresight, perhaps, as the giver of prophecy intended should ever be afforded by such parts of prophecy.

2. A long series of prophecy being applicable to such and such events, is itself a proof that it was intended of them: as the rules, by which we naturally judge and determine, in common cases parallel to this, will show. This observation I make in answer to the common objection against the application of the prophecies, that, considering each of them distinctly by itself, it does not at all appear, that they were intended of those particular events, to which they are applied by Christians;[13] and therefore it is to be supposed, that, if they meant anything, they were intended of other events unknown to us, and not of these at all.

Now there are two kinds of writing, which bear a great resemblance to prophecy, with respect to the matter before us: the mythological, and the satirical, where the satire is, to a certain degree, concealed. And a man might be assured, that he understood what an author intended by a fable or parable, related without any application or moral, merely from seeing it to be easily capable of such application, and that such a moral might naturally be deduced from it. And he might be fully assured, that such persons and events were intended in a satirical writing, merely from its being applicable to them. And, agreeably to the last observation, he might be in a good measure satisfied of it, though he were not enough informed in affairs, or in the story of such persons, to understand half the satire. For,

[13] [Since Butler's time, the whole subject of prophecy has been diligently studied, so that though the principles he here lays down are in themselves sound, and are needed in the interpretation of some obscure and of unfulfilled predictions, yet most of prophetic Scripture is sufficiently plain to supply direct evidence of a Divine origin. "The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus;" his first coming to suffer, and the subsequent establishment of his kingdom are foreshadowed in the history of the ancient people of God, are the general principles to be kept in view. The whole subject has been discussed by Hurd on Prophecy, and by Davison; some of the principal conclusions may be seen in 'The Bible Hand-book,' chap. iv., sec. 8. Rel. Tr. Soc.]

his satisfaction, that he understood the meaning, the intended meaning, of these writings, would be greater or less in proportion as he saw the general turn of them to be capable of such application; and in proportion to the number of particular things capable of it. And thus, if a long series of prophecy is applicable to the present state of the church, and to the political situations of the kingdoms of the world, some thousand years after these prophecies were delivered, and a long series of prophecy delivered before the coming of Christ is applicable to him; these things are in themselves a proof, that the prophetic history was intended of him, and of those events: in proportion as the general turn of it is capable of such application, and to the number and variety of particular prophecies capable of it. And though, in all just way of consideration, the appearing completion of prophecies is to be allowed to be thus explanatory of, and to determine, their meaning; yet it is to be remembered further, that the ancient Jews applied the prophecies, to a Messiah before his coming, in much the same manner as Christians do now:[14] and that the primitive Christians interpreted the prophecies respecting the state of the church and of the world in the last ages, in the sense which the event seems to confirm and verify. And from these things it may be made appear:

3. That the showing even to a high probability, if that 3
could be, that the prophets thought of some other events, in such and such predictions, and not those at all which Christians allege to be completions of those predictions; or that such and such prophecies are capable of being applied to other events than those to which Christians apply them—that this would not confute or destroy the force of the argument from prophecy, even with regard to those very instances. For, observe how this matter really is. If one knew such a person to be the sole author of such a book, and was certainly assured, or satisfied to any degree, that one knew the whole of what he intended in it; one should be assured or satisfied to such degree, that one knew the

[14] [Lyall has shown that the prophecies applied in the New Testament to our Lord were understood by the ancient Jews to apply to the coming Messiah. See *Propædia Prophetica.*]

whole meaning of that book: for the meaning of a book is nothing but the meaning of the author. But if one knew a person to have compiled a book out of memoirs, which he received from another, of vastly superior knowledge in the subject of it, especially if it were a book full of great intricacies and difficulties; it would in nowise follow, that one knew the whole meaning of the book, from knowing the whole meaning of the compiler: for the original memoirs, *i. e.* the author of them, might have, and there would be no degree of presumption, in many cases, against supposing him to have, some further meaning than the compiler saw. To say then, that the Scriptures, and the things contained in them, can have no other or further meaning than those persons thought or had, who first recited or wrote them;[15] is evidently saying, that those persons were the original, proper, and sole authors of those books, *i. e.* that they are not inspired: which is absurd, whilst the authority of these books is under examination; *i. e.* till you have determined they are of no Divine authority at all. Till this be determined, it must in all reason be supposed, not indeed that they have, for this is taking for granted that they are inspired; but that they may have, some further meaning than what the compilers saw or understood. And, upon this supposition, it is supposable also, that this further meaning may be fulfilled. Now events corresponding to prophecies, interpreted in a different meaning from that in which the prophets are supposed to have understood them; this affords, in a manner, the same proof, that this different sense was originally intended, as it would have afforded, if the prophets had not understood their predictions in the sense it is supposed they did; because there is no presumption of their sense of them being the whole sense of them. And it has been already shown, that the apparent completions of prophecy must be allowed to be explanatory of its meaning.

b So that the question is, whether a series of prophecy has been fulfilled, in a natural or proper, *i. e.* in any real, sense of the words of it. For such completion is equally a proof of foresight more than human, whether the prophets are, or are not, supposed to have understood it in a different sense.

[15] [See Note 5, chap. iii. pt. ii.]

I say, supposed; for though I think it clear, that the prophets did not understand the full meaning of their predictions; it is another question, how far they thought they did, and in what sense they understood them.

Hence may be seen, to how little purpose those persons busy themselves who endeavour to prove, that the prophetic history is applicable to events of the age in which it was written, or of ages before it. Indeed to have proved this, before there was any appearance of a further completion of it, might have answered some purpose; for it might have prevented the expectation of any such further completion. Thus could Porphyry have shown, that some principal parts of the book of Daniel, for instance, the seventh verse of the seventh chapter, which the Christians interpreted of the latter ages, was applicable to events, which happened before or about the age of Antiochus Epiphanes; this might have prevented them from expecting any further completion of it. And unless there was then, as I think there must have been, external evidence concerning that book, more than is come down to us; such a discovery might have been a stumbling-block in the way of Christianity itself; considering the authority which our Saviour [16] has given to the book of Daniel, and how much the general scheme of Christianity presupposes the truth of it. But even this discovery, had there been any such [17], would be of very little weight with reasonable men now; if this passage, thus applicable to events before the age of Porphyry, appears to be applicable also to events which succeeded the dissolution of the Roman empire. I mention this, not at all as intending to insinuate, that the division of this empire into ten parts, for it plainly was divided into about that number, were, alone and by itself, of any moment in verifying the prophetic history: but only as an example of the thing I am speaking

[16] [Matt. xxiv. 15.]

[17] It appears, that Porphyry did nothing worth mentioning in this way. For Jerome on the place says, *Duas posteriores bestias—in uno Macedonum regno ponit.* And as to the ten kings; *Decem reges enumerat, qui fuerunt sævissimi: ipsosque reges non unius ponit regni, verbi gratia, Macedoniæ, Syriæ, Asiæ, et Ægypti; sed de diversis regnis unum efficit regum ordinem.* And in this way of interpretation, any thing may be made of any thing.

of. And thus upon the whole, the matter of inquiry evidently must be, as above put, Whether the prophecies are applicable to Christ, and to the present state of the world and of the church: applicable in such a degree, as to imply foresight: not whether they are capable of any other application; though I know no pretence for saying the general turn of them is capable of any other.

These observations are, I think, just; and the evidence referred to in them real: though there may be people who will not accept of such imperfect information from Scripture. Some too have not integrity and regard enough to truth, to attend to evidence, which keeps the mind in doubt, perhaps perplexity, and which is much of a different sort from what they expected. And it plainly requires a degree of modesty and fairness, beyond what every one has, for a man to say, not to the world, but to himself, that there is a real appearance of somewhat of great weight in this matter, though he is not able thoroughly to satisfy himself about it; but it shall have its influence upon him, in proportion to its appearing reality and weight. It is much more easy, and more falls in with the negligence, presumption, and wilfulness of the generality, to determine at once, with a decisive air, There is nothing in it. The prejudices arising from that absolute contempt and scorn, with which this evidence is treated in the world, I do not mention. For what indeed can be said to persons, who are weak enough in their understandings to think this any presumption against it; or, if they do not, are yet weak enough in their temper to be influenced by such prejudices, upon such a subject?

II.

I shall now, secondly, endeavour to give some account of the general argument for the truth of Christianity, consisting both of the direct and circumstantial evidence, considered as making up one argument. Indeed to state and examine this argument fully, would be a work much beyond the compass of this whole treatise; nor is so much as a proper abridgment of it to be expected here. Yet the present subject requires to have some brief account of it given. For it is the kind of evidence, upon which most questions of

difficulty, in common practice, are determined: evidence a
arising from various coincidences, which support and confirm each other, and in this manner prove, with more or less certainty, the point under consideration. And I choose to do it also: first, because it seems to be of the greatest importance, and not duly attended to by every one, that the proof of revelation is, not some direct and express things b
only, but a great variety of circumstantial things also; and though each of these direct and circumstantial things is indeed to be considered separately, yet they are afterwards to be joined together; for that the proper force of the evidence consists in the result of those several things, considered in their respects to each other, and united into one view: and in the next place, because it seems to me, that the matters of fact here set down, which are acknowledged by unbelievers, must be acknowledged by them also to c
contain together a degree of evidence of great weight, if they could be brought to lay these several things before themselves distinctly, and then with attention consider them together; instead of that cursory thought of them, to which we are familiarized. For being familiarized to the cursory thought of things as really hinders the weight of them from being seen, as from having its due influence upon practice.

The thing asserted, and the truth of which is to be inquired into, is this: That over and above our reason and affections, which God has given us for the information of our judgment and the conduct of our lives, he has also, by external revelation, given us an account of himself and his moral government over the world, implying a future state of rewards and punishments; *i. e.* hath revealed the system of natural religion: for natural religion may be externally[18] revealed by God, as the ignorant may be taught it by mankind their fellow-creatures—that God, I say, has given us the evidence of revelation, as well as the evidence of reason, to ascertain this moral system; together with an account of a particular dispensation of Providence, which reason could d
no way have discovered, and a particular institution of religion founded on it, for the recovery of mankind out of

[18] P. 154, etc.

their present wretched condition and raising them to the perfection and final happiness of their nature.

2 This revelation, whether real or supposed, may be considered as wholly historical. For prophecy is nothing but the history of events before they come to pass; doctrines also are matters of fact; and precepts come under the same notion. And the general design of Scripture, which contains in it this revelation, thus considered as historical, may be said to be, to give us an account of the world, in this one single view as God's world: by which it appears essentially distinguished from all other books, so far as I have found,
a except such as are copied from it. It begins with an account of God's creation of the world, in order to ascertain, and distinguish from all others, who is the object of our worship, by what he has done: in order to ascertain, who he is, concerning whose providence, commands, promises, and threatenings, this sacred book, all along, treats; the Maker and Proprietor of the world, he whose creatures we are, the God of Nature: in order likewise to distinguish him from the idols of the nations, which are either imaginary beings, *i. e.* no beings at all; or else part of that creation, the historical relation of which is here given. And St. John, not improbably, with an eye to this Mosaic account of the creation, begins his Gospel with an account of our Saviour's pre-existence, and that *all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made*:[19] agreeably to the doctrine of St. Paul, that *God created all things by Jesus Christ.*[20] This being premised, the Scripture, taken together, seems to profess to contain a kind of an abridgment of the history of the world, in the view just now mentioned: that is, a general account of the condition of religion and its professors, during the continuance of that apostasy from God, and state of wickedness, which it every where supposes the
b world to lie in. And this account of the state of religion carries with it some brief account of the political state of things, as religion is affected by it. Revelation indeed considers the common affairs of this world, and what is going on in it, as a mere scene of distraction; and cannot be supposed to concern itself with foretelling at what time Rome, or Baby-

[19] John i. 3. [20] Eph. iii. 9

lon, or Greece, or any particular place, should be the most conspicuous seat of that tyranny and dissoluteness, which all places equally aspire to be; cannot, I say, be supposed to give any account of this wild scene for its own sake.[21] But it seems to contain some very general account of the chief governments of the world, as the general state of religion has been, is, or shall be, affected by them, from the first transgression, and during the whole interval of the world's continuing in its present state, to a certain future period, spoken of both in the Old and New Testament, very distinctly, and in great variety of expression: *The times of the restitution of all things*:[22] when *the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets*:[23] when *the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people*;[24] as it is represented to be during this apostasy, but *judgment shall be given to the saints*,[25] and *they shall reign*:[26] *and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High*.[27]

Upon this general view of the Scripture, I would remark,
how great a length of time the whole relation takes up, near 1
six thousand years of which are past; and how great a
variety of things it treats of; the natural and moral system 2
or history of the world, including the time when it was
formed, all contained in the very first book, and evidently
written in a rude and unlearned age; and in subsequent
books, the various common and prophetic history, and the
particular dispensation of Christianity. Now all this to-
gether gives the largest scope for criticism; and for confu- 3
tation of what is capable of being confuted, either from reason, or from common history, or from any inconsistence in its several parts. And it is a thing which deserves, I think, to be mentioned, that whereas some imagine the supposed doubtfulness of the evidence for revelation implies

[21] ['Scripture is an inspired history of religion, and of other things as religion is affected by them. Idolatrous nations are introduced, not as independently important, but as influencing the church, or as influenced by it.'—*Bible Hand-book*, p. 118.]

[22] Acts iii. 21.
[23] Rev. x. 7.
[24] Dan. ii. 44.
[25] Dan. vii. 22.
[26] Rev. xxii. 5.
[27] Dan. vii. 27.

a positive argument that it is not true; it appears, on the contrary, to imply a positive argument that it is true. For, could any common relation, of such an antiquity, extent, and variety (for in these things the stress of what I am now observing lies), be proposed to the examination of the world; that it could not, in an age of knowledge and liberty, be confuted, or shown to have nothing in it, to the satisfaction of reasonable men; this would be thought a strong presumptive proof of its truth. And indeed it must be a proof of it, just in proportion to the probability, that if it were false, it might be shown to be so; and this, I think, is scarce pretended to be shown, but upon principles and in ways of arguing, which have been clearly obviated.[28] Nor does it at all appear, that any set of men, who believe natural religion, are of the opinion, that Christianity has been thus confuted. But to proceed.

Together with the moral system of the world, the Old Testament contains a chronological account of the beginning of it, and from thence, an unbroken genealogy of mankind for many ages before common history begins; and carried on as much further as to make up a continued thread of history of the length of between three and four thousand years. It contains an account of God's making a covenant with a particular nation, that they should be his people, and he would be their God, in a peculiar sense; of his often interposing miraculously in their affairs; giving them the promise, and, long after, the possession, of a particular country; assuring them of the greatest national prosperity in it, if they would worship him, in opposition to the idols which the rest of the world worshipped, and obey his commands; and threatening them with unexampled punishments, if they disobeyed him, and fell into the general idolatry: insomuch that this one nation should continue to be the observation and the wonder of all the world. It declares particularly, that *God would scatter them among all people, from one end of the earth unto the other*: but that, *when they should return unto the Lord their God, he would have compassion upon them, and gather them from all the nations, whither he had scattered them*: that *Israel should be saved in the Lord*

[28] Chap. ii. iii. etc.

with an everlasting salvation; and not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. And as some of these promises are conditional, others are as absolute as anything can be expressed: that the time should come, when *the people should be all righteous, and inherit the land for ever:* that *though God would make a full end of all nations whither he had scattered them, yet would he not make a full end of them:* that *he would bring again the captivity of his people Israel, and plant them upon their land, and they should be no more pulled up out of their land:* that *the seed of Israel should not cease from being a nation for ever.*[29] It foretells, that God would raise them up a particular person, in whom all his promises should finally be fulfilled—the Messiah, who should be, in a high and eminent sense, their anointed Prince and Saviour. This was foretold in such a manner, as raised a general expectation of such a person in the nation, as appears from the New Testament, and is an acknowledged fact; an expectation of his coming at such a particular time before any one appeared claiming to be that person, and when there was no ground for such an expectation but from the prophecies: which expectation, therefore, must in all reason be presumed to be explanatory of those prophecies, if there were any doubt about their meaning. It seems moreover to foretell, that this person should be rejected by that nation, to whom he had been so long promised, and though he was so much desired by them.[30] And it expressly foretells, that he should be the Saviour of the Gentiles; and even that the completion of the scheme, contained in this book, and then begun, and in its progress, should be somewhat so great, that, in comparison with it, the restoration of the Jews alone would be but of small account. *It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.* And, *In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the*

[29] Deut. xxviii. 64. xxx. 2, 3; Isa. xlv. 17. lx. 21; Jer. xxx. 11 xlvi. 28; Amos ix. 14, 15; Jer. xxxi. 36.

[30] Is. viii. 14, 15; xlix. 5, ch. liii.; Mal. i. 10, 11, and ch. iii.

word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish.[31] The Scripture further contains an account, that at the time the Messiah was expected, a person rose up, in this nation, claiming to be that Messiah, to be the person, whom all the prophecies referred to, and in whom they should centre: that he spent some years in a continued course of miraculous works; and endued his immediate disciples and followers with a power of doing the same, as a proof of the truth of that religion, which he commissioned them to publish: that, invested with this authority and power, they made numerous converts in the remotest countries, and settled and established his religion in the world; to the end of which the Scripture professes to give a prophetic account of the state of this religion amongst mankind.

3 Let us now suppose a person utterly ignorant of history, to have all this related to him out of the Scripture. Or suppose such an one, having the Scripture put into his hands, to remark these things in it, not knowing but that the whole, even its civil history, as well as the other parts of it, might be, from beginning to end, an entire invention; and to ask, What truth was in it, and whether the revelation here related was real, or a fiction? And, instead of a direct answer, suppose him, all at once, to be told the following confessed facts; and then to unite them into one view.

4 Let him first be told, in how great a degree the profession and establishment of natural religion, the belief that there is one God to be worshipped, that virtue is his law, and that mankind shall be rewarded and punished hereafter, as they obey and disobey it here; in how very great a degree, I say, the profession and establishment of this moral system in the world is owing to the revelation, whether real or supposed, contained in this book; the establishment of this moral system, even in those countries which do not acknowledge the proper authority of the Scripture.[32] Let him be

[31] Is. xlix. 6. ch. ii. ch. xi. ch. lvi. 7; Mal. i. 11. To which must be added, the other prophecies of the like kind, several in the New Testament, and very many in the Old; which describe what shall be the completion of the revealed plan of Providence.

[32] Page 233.

told also, what number of nations do acknowledge its proper authority. Let him then take in the consideration, of what importance religion is to mankind. And upon these things he might, I think, truly observe, that this supposed revelation's obtaining and being received in the world, with all the circumstances and effects of it, considered together as one event, is the most conspicuous and important event in the story of mankind: that a book of this nature, and thus promulged and recommended to our consideration, demands, as if by a voice from heaven, to have its claim most seriously examined into; and that, before such examination, to treat it with any kind of scoffing and ridicule, is an offence against natural piety. But it is to be remembered, that how much soever the establishment of natural religion in the world is owing to the Scripture-revelation, this does not destroy the proof of religion from reason, any more than the proof of Euclid's Elements is destroyed, by a man's knowing or thinking, that he should never have seen the truth of the several propositions contained in it, nor had those propositions come into his thoughts, but for that mathematician.

Let such a person as we are speaking of be, in the next place, informed of the acknowledged antiquity of the first parts of this book; and that its chronology, its account of the time when the earth, and the several parts of it, were first peopled with human creatures, is no way contradicted, but is really confirmed, by the natural and civil history of the world, collected from common historians, from the state of the earth, and from the late invention of arts and sciences. And as the Scripture contains an unbroken thread of common and civil history, from the creation to the captivity, for between three and four thousand years; let the person we are speaking of be told, in the next place, that this general history, as it is not contradicted, but is confirmed by profane history as much as there would be reason to expect, upon supposition of its truth; so there is nothing in the whole history *itself*, to give any reasonable ground of suspicion of its not being, in the general, a faithful and literally true genealogy of men, and series of things. I speak here only of the common Scripture-history, or of the course of ordinary events related in it, as distinguished from

miracles and from the prophetic history. In all the Scripture-narrations of this kind, following events arise out of foregoing ones as in all other histories. There appears nothing related as done in any age not conformable to the manners of that age; nothing in the account of a succeeding age, which, one would say, could not be true, or was improbable, from the account of things in the preceding one. There is nothing in the characters, which would raise a thought of their being
2 feigned; but all the internal marks imaginable of their being real. It is to be added also, that mere genealogies, bare narratives of the number of years, which persons called by such and such names lived, do not carry the face of fiction; perhaps do carry some presumption of veracity: and all unadorned narratives, which have nothing to surprise, may be thought to carry somewhat of the like presumption too. And the domestic and the political history is plainly credible. There may be incidents in Scripture, which, taken alone in the naked way they are told, may appear strange; especially to persons of other manners, temper, education; but there are also incidents of undoubted truth, in many or most persons' lives, which, in the same circumstances, would appear to the full as strange[33]. There may be mistakes of transcribers, there may be other real or seeming mistakes, not easy to be particularly accounted for: but there are certainly no more things of this kind in the Scripture, than what were to have been expected in books of such antiquity; and nothing, in any wise, sufficient to discredit the general narrative. Now, that a history claiming to commence from the creation, and extending, in one continual series, through so great a length of time and variety of events, should have such appearances of reality and truth in its whole contexture, is surely a very remarkable circumstance in its favour. And as all this is applicable to the common history of the New Testament, so there is further credibility, and a very high one, given to it by profane authors: many of these writing of the same times, and confirming the truth of customs and events which are incidentally as well as more purposely mentioned in it. And this credibility of the

[33] [Archbishop Whately has presented this thought in a practical form in the 'Historic Doubts' concerning Napoleon Bonaparte.]

common Scripture-history, gives some credibility to its miraculous history; especially as this is interwoven with the common, so as that they imply each other, and both together make up one relation.

Let it then be more particularly observed to this person, that it is an acknowledged matter of fact, which is indeed implied in the foregoing observation, that there was such a nation as the Jews, of the greatest antiquity, whose government and general polity was founded on the law, here related to be given them by Moses as from heaven: that natural religion, though with rites additional yet no way contrary to it, was their established religion, which cannot be said of the Gentile world: and that their very being as a nation, depended upon their acknowledgment of one God, the God of the universe. For, suppose in their captivity in Babylon, they had gone over to the religion of their conquerors, there would have remained no bond of union, to keep them a distinct people. And whilst they were under their own kings, in their own country, a total apostasy from God would have been the dissolution of their whole government. They in such a sense nationally acknowledged and worshipped the Maker of heaven and earth, when the rest of the world were sunk in idolatry, as rendered them, in fact, the peculiar people of God. And this so remarkable an establishment and preservation of natural religion amongst them, seems to add some peculiar credibility to the historical evidence for the miracles of Moses and the prophets: because these miracles are a full satisfactory account of this event, which plainly wants to be accounted for, and cannot otherwise. c

Let this person, supposed wholly ignorant of history, be acquainted further, that one claiming to be the Messiah, of Jewish extraction, rose up at the time when this nation, from the prophecies above mentioned, expected the Messiah: that he was rejected, as it seemed to have been foretold he should, by the body of the people, under the direction of their rulers: that in the course of a very few years, he was believed on and acknowledged as the promised Messiah, by great numbers among the Gentiles, agreeably to the prophecies of Scripture, yet not upon the evidence of prophecy, but of d

miracles[34], of which miracles we also have strong historical evidence; (by which I mean here no more than must be acknowledged by unbelievers; for let pious frauds and follies be admitted to weaken, it is absurd to say they destroy, our evidence of miracles wrought in proof of Christianity)[35]: that this religion approving itself to the reason of mankind, and carrying its own evidence with it, so far as reason is a judge of its system, and being no way contrary to reason in those parts of it which require to be believed upon the mere authority of its Author; that this religion, I say, gradually spread and supported itself for some hundred years, not only without any assistance from temporal power, but under constant discouragements, and often the bitterest persecutions from it; and then became the religion of the world: that in the mean time, the Jewish nation and government were destroyed in a very remarkable manner, and the people carried away captive and dispersed through the most distant countries; in which state of dispersion they have remained fifteen hundred years; and that they remain a numerous people, united amongst themselves, and distinguished from the rest of the world, as they were in the days of Moses, by the profession of his law; and everywhere looked upon in a manner, which one scarce knows how distinctly to express but in the words of the prophetic account of it, given so many ages before it came to pass; *Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.*[36]

The appearance of a standing miracle, in the Jews remaining a distinct people in their dispersion, and the confirmation which this event appears to give to the truth of revelation, may be thought to be answered, by their religion's forbidden them intermarriages with those of any other, and prescribing them a great many peculiarities in their food, by which they are debarred from the means of incorporating with the people in whose countries they live. This is not, I think, a satisfactory account of that which it pretends to account for. But what does it pretend to account for? The correspondence between this event and

[34] P. 253, etc. [35] P. 262, etc.

[36] Deut. xxviii. 37.

the prophecies; or the coincidence of both with a long dispensation of Providence, of a peculiar nature, towards that people formerly? No. It is only the event itself, which is offered to be thus accounted for; which single event taken alone, abstracted from all such correspondence and coincidence, perhaps would not have appeared miraculous: but that correspondence and coincidence may be so, though the event itself be supposed not. Thus the concurrence of our Saviour's being born at Bethlehem, with a long foregoing series of prophecy and other coincidences, is doubtless miraculous; the series of prophecy, and other coincidences, and the event, being admitted: though the event itself, his birth at that place, appears to have been brought about in a natural way; of which, however, no one can be certain.

And as several of these events seem, in some degree expressly, to have verified the prophetic history already; so likewise they may be considered further, as having a peculiar aspect towards the full completion of it; as affording some presumption that the whole of it shall, one time or other, be fulfilled. Thus, that the Jews have been so wonderfully preserved in their long and wide dispersion; which is indeed the direct fulfilling of some prophecies, but is now mentioned only as looking forward to somewhat yet to come; that natural religion came forth from Judæa, and spread in the degree it has done over the world, before lost in idolatry; which, together with some other things, have distinguished that very place, in like manner as the people of it are distinguished: that this great change of religion over the earth was brought about under the profession and acknowledgment, that Jesus was the promised Messiah: things of this kind naturally turn the thoughts of serious men towards the full completion of the prophetic history, concerning the final restoration of that people; concerning the establishment of the everlasting kingdom among them, the kingdom of the Messiah; and the future state of the world, under this sacred government. Such circumstances and events, compared with these prophecies, though no completions of them, yet would not, I think, be spoken of as nothing in the argument, by a person upon his first being informed of them. They fall in with the prophetic history of things still future,

give it some additional credibility, have the appearance of being somewhat in order to the full completion of it.

Indeed it requires a good degree of knowledge, and great calmness and consideration, to be able to judge thoroughly of the evidence for the truth of Christianity, from that part of the prophetic history which relates to the situation of the kingdoms of the world, and to the state of the church, from the establishment of Christianity to the present time. But it appears from a general view of it, to be very material. And those persons who have thoroughly examined it, and some of them were men of the coolest tempers, greatest capacities, and least liable to imputations of prejudice, insist upon it as determinately conclusive.

Suppose now a person quite ignorant of history, first to recollect the passages above mentioned out of Scripture, without knowing but that the whole was a late fiction, then to be informed of the correspondent facts now mentioned, and to unite them all into one view: that the profession and establishment of natural religion in the world is greatly owing, in different ways, to this book, and the supposed revelation which it contains; that it is acknowledged to be of the earliest antiquity; that its chronology and common history are entirely credible; that this ancient nation, the Jews, of whom it chiefly treats, appear to have been, in fact, the people of God, in a distinguished sense: that, as there was a national expectation amongst them, raised from the prophecies, of a Messiah to appear at such a time, so one at this time appeared claiming to be that Messiah; that he was rejected by this nation, but received by the Gentiles, not upon the evidence of prophecy, but of miracles; that the religion he taught supported itself under the greatest difficulties, gained ground, and at length became the religion of the world; that in the mean time the Jewish polity was utterly destroyed, and the nation dispersed over the face of the earth; that notwithstanding this, they have remained a distinct numerous people for so many centuries, even to this day; which not only appears to be the express completion of several prophecies concerning them, but also renders it, as one may speak, a visible and easy possibility that the promises made to them as a nation, may yet be

fulfilled. And to these acknowledged truths, let the person we have been supposing add, as I think he ought, whether every one will allow it or no, the obvious appearances which there are of the state of the world, in other respects besides what relates to the Jews, and of the Christian Church, having so long answered, and still answering to the prophetic history. Suppose, I say, these facts set over against the things before mentioned out of the Scripture, and seriously compared with them; the joint view of both together, must, I think, appear of very great weight to a considerate reasonable person: of much greater indeed, upon having them first laid before him, than is easy for us, who are so familiarized to them, to conceive, without some particular attention for that purpose.

All these things, and the several particulars contained F
under them, require to be distinctly and most thoroughly examined into; that the weight of each may be judged of,
upon such examination, and such conclusion drawn as results 1
from their united force. But this has not been attempted here. I have gone no further than to show, that the general imperfect view of them now given, the confessed historical evidence for miracles, and the many obvious appearing completions of prophecy, together with the collateral things[37] here mentioned, and there are several others of the like sort; that all this together, which, being fact, must be acknowledged by unbelievers, amounts to real evidence of somewhat more than human in this matter: evidence much more important than careless men, who have been accustomed
only to transient and partial views of it, can imagine; and 2
indeed abundantly sufficient to act upon. And these things, I apprehend, must be acknowledged by unbelievers. For though they may say, that the historical evidence of miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, is not sufficient to convince them that such miracles were really wrought; they cannot deny, that there is such historical evidence, it being a known matter of fact that there is. They may say, the conformity between the prophecies and events is by

[37] All the particular things mentioned in this chapter, not reducible to the head of certain miracles, or determinate completions of prophecy. See pp. 251, 252.

accident; but there are many instances in which such conformity itself cannot be denied. They may say, with regard to such kind of collateral things as those above mentioned, that any odd accidental events, without meaning, will have a meaning found in them by fanciful people; and that such as are fanciful in any one certain way, will make out a thousand coincidences, which seem to favour their peculiar follies. Men, I say, may talk thus: but no one who is serious, can possibly think these things to be nothing, if he considers the importance of collateral things, and even of lesser circumstances, in the evidence of probability, as distinguished, in Nature, from the evidence of demonstration. In many cases indeed it seems to require the truest judgment, to determine with exactness the weight of circumstantial evidence; but it is very often altogether as convincing as that which is the most express and direct.

This general view of the evidence for Christianity,[38] considered as making one argument, may also serve to recommend to serious persons, to set down every thing which they think may be of any real weight at all in proof of it, and particularly the many seeming completions of prophecy: and they will find that, judging by the natural rules, by which we judge of probable evidence in common matters, they amount to a much higher degree of proof, upon such a joint review, than could be supposed upon considering them separately, at different times; how strong soever the proof might before appear to them, upon such separate views of it. For probable proofs, by being added, not only increase

[38] [This summary of Christian evidence is clear, and in many respects striking and suggestive. It would be much more impressive, however, if more justice were done to the morality of Scripture, and the evident adaptedness of its spiritual truths to the necessities of men. It is not easy to define logically the force of this part of the Christian evidence, but all who have studied it attest its value. "The spirit of prophecy," says Baxter, "was the first witness; the spirit of miraculous power was the second; and now we have the spirit of renovation and holiness." There is still a sense in which the language of the Samaritans is true: "Now we believe . . . for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world," John iv. 42.]

the evidence, but multiply it.[39] Nor should I dissuade any 3
one from setting down what he thought made for the contrary side. But then it is to be remembered, not in order to influence his judgment, but his practice, that a mistake on one side may be, in its consequences, much more dangerous than a mistake on the other. And what course is most safe, and what most dangerous, is a consideration thought very
material, when we deliberate, not concerning events, but 4
concerning conduct in our temporal affairs. To be influenced by this consideration in our judgment, to believe or disbelieve upon it, is indeed as much prejudice, as any thing whatever. And, like other prejudices, it operates contrary ways in

[39] ["Taken together," and, as he has already stated, "*multiplied* together;" that is, the improbability of several marks of truth existing *simultaneously* in the same thing, and that thing false, is much greater than the *sum* of the improbabilities of each existing in it *separately*. "It seems to my understanding," says Mr. Wilberforce, "at least morally impossible that so many different species of proofs, and all so strong, should have lent their concurrent aid, and have united their joint force, in the establishment of falsehood."—*Practical View*, chap. v. "If man's contrivance, or if the favour of accident, *could* have given to Christianity any of its apparent testimonies . . . there could be no room to believe, nor even to imagine, that all . . . could be united together by any such causes. If a successful craft could have contrived its public miracles, or so much as the pretence of them, it requires another reach of craft and new resources to provide and adapt its prophecies to the same object. Further, it demanded not only a different art, but a totally opposite character, to conceive and propagate its admirable morals. Again, the achievement of its propagation, in defiance of the powers and the terrors of the world, implied a new energy of personal genius and other qualities of action than any concurring in the work before. Lastly, the model of the life of its founder, in the very description of it, is a work of so much originality and wisdom, as could be the offspring only of consummate powers of invention. The genuine state of the Christian evidence is this: there is unambiguous testimony to its works of miraculous power; there are oracles of prophecy; there are other distinct marks and signs of a Divine original within it. And no state but that of truth could in one subject produce them all, or can now account for their existence."—Davison's *Discourses on Prophecy*, p. 31.]

different men; for some are inclined to believe what they hope, and others what they fear. And it is manifest unreasonableness to apply to men's passions in order to gain their assent. But in deliberations concerning conduct, there is nothing which reason more requires to be taken into the account, than the importance of it. For, suppose it doubtful, what would be the consequence of acting in this, or in a contrary manner: still, that taking one side could be attended with little or no bad consequence, and taking the other might be attended with the greatest, must appear, to unprejudiced reason, of the highest moment towards determining how we are to act. But the truth of our religion, like the truth of common matters, is to be judged of by all
5 the evidence taken together. And unless the whole series of things which may be alleged in this argument, and every particular thing in it, can reasonably be supposed to have been by accident (for here the stress of the argument for Christianity lies); then is the truth of it proved: in like manner, as if in any common case numerous events acknowledged, were to be alleged in proof of any other event disputed; the truth of the disputed event would be proved, not only if any one of the acknowledged ones did of itself clearly imply it, but, though no one of them singly did so, if the whole of the acknowledged events taken together could not in reason be supposed to have happened, unless the disputed one were true.

It is obvious, how much advantage the nature of this evidence gives to those persons who attack Christianity, especially in conversation. For it is easy to show, in a short and lively manner, that such and such things are liable to objection, that this and another thing is of little weight in itself; but impossible to show, in like manner, the united force of the whole argument in one view.

6 However, lastly, as it has been made appear, that there is no presumption against a revelation as miraculous; that the general scheme of Christianity, and the principal parts of it, are conformable to the experienced constitution of things, and the whole perfectly credible: so the account now given of the positive evidence for it shows, that this evidence is such as, from the nature of it, cannot be destroyed, though it should be lessened.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE OBJECTIONS WHICH MAY BE MADE AGAINST ARGUING FROM THE ANALOGY OF NATURE, TO RELIGION.

[Against reasonings founded on analogy some may raise objections; and a few of these it is intended here to consider.

A Enumerated 1—5. It is alleged, for example,

1 It is a poor thing to meet difficulties in revealed religion by saying that there are the same difficulties in Nature, when we want to clear religion from all difficulties. Answer,

a The thing wanted is, it seems, to *comprehend* Providence and God.

b To reason from the known (natural religion) to the unknown (revealed) is not a poor thing, compared with no knowledge; so it is allowed in science and medicine.

c If natural religion is admitted to be true, it is important to show that objections to revealed religion apply equally to natural, for so revealed religion is vindicated.

2 But it is surely a strange way of convincing men of the obligations of religion to show that they have as little reason for their worldly pursuits.

Answer,

a Religion is a practical thing, as business is; and, like reasons, or any reasons, may be sufficient to guide us in both cases, and ought, from prudence, to guide us.

b If the objection be that religion should not have doubtful evidence; then note that worldly pursuits are often doubtful, yet men follow them. Besides, the case of religion, though not free from all doubt, is much stronger than the case of worldly conduct.

3 It is a strange way of vindicating God's character in religion for goodness and justice, to show that like objections lie against Providence, when we ought rather to answer the objections themselves.

Answer.

a The treatise does not profess to vindicate God's character, but to show men their obligations; and to do this, all that is needed is to show that, for aught we know, the objections are consistent with goodness and justice, and may be even proofs of them.

b It is attempted to answer objections to God's goodness and justice, not by showing that the like objections (*supposed*

conclusive), be against Providence, but by showing that the objections *are not conclusive*, applying equally to God's present government as a matter of fact.

c Even if these objections are not answered in this way, the facts of religion remain as credible, in spite of the objections.

d Though objections to the reasonableness of religion cannot be answered without considering its reasonableness, objections against its credibility may: for

1 It is a system of facts, and

2 Though sometimes useful to show how reasonable any part is, this cannot always be necessary, and

3 The obligations of religion depend upon the reasonableness, not of the system, but of the practice, and so it is enough if in the system there be nothing unreasonable; and

e Analogy may supply no answer to objections against the goodness of the system, but it does to objections against the credibility of the system as a matter of fact. This is what is meant in these remarks.

4 Religion rests on unsatisfactory evidence; that is, on evidence not sufficient for certainty; but

a So is the evidence of any system of life—what is best—what rules will secure it? Religion, therefore, is like every other real thing in this world, its evidence real, but not certain; uncertainty belonging to our very condition.

b Moreover, religion is simply intended to try and discipline our virtue. It is a probation, as it would not be, if its evidence were overbearing.

c So that the only question is, whether its evidence is sufficient in prudence to influence the judgment and practice, while thus testing our virtue.

5 In fact (it will be said) men are not influenced by this evidence, and that is a fatal objection.

Answer:

a The question is not what men do, but what they ought to do in practice.

b The objection is nothing against religion, which answers its end in testing men, whether they are influenced by it or not.

c It is allowed the evidence of religion has some weight, but so it ought to have some influence, and if such influence be allowed to this treatise, it has not missed its end.

B On the argument of the treatise Butler notes,

1 That he reasons, not upon his own principles, but upon (that is, notwithstanding) the principles of his opponents; admitting fatalism, and affirming nothing of the moral fitness of moral acts, independent of the will of the Creator.

2 He treats religion simply as a matter of fact; as a history which, moreover, reveals as facts God's moral government, present and future, etc., and which are proved, not demonstratively (a thing impossible in matter of fact), but practically. Abstract questions, and the principles of things involved in all those facts, are not discussed.

3 Hence the force of this treatise.

a To those who hold liberty and moral fitness it is an additional proof of the truth of religion, and to those who deny them it is a new proof.

b To believers it strengthens existing evidence, and answers objections; to unbelievers, it proves Christianity credible; and,

c More generally, analogy confirms all facts to which it can be applied, and is the only proof of most. It is on the side of religion, and ought to be followed especially by all who profess to follow Nature.]

F every one would consider, with such attention as they are ound, even in point of morality, to consider, what they udge and give characters of, the occasion of this chapter vould be, in some good measure at least, superseded. But ince this is not to be expected; for some we find do not oncern themselves to understand even what they write gainst: since this treatise, in common with most others, ies open to objections, which may appear very material to houghtful men at first sight; and, besides that, seems eculiarly liable to the objections of such as can judge withut thinking, and of such as can censure without judging; may not be amiss to set down the chief of these objections hich occur to me, and consider them to their hands. And ey are such as these: [1]

"That it is a poor thing to solve difficulties in revelation, A
y saying, that there are the same in natural religion; when 1
hat is wanting is to clear both of them of these their ommon, as well as other their respective, difficulties; but

[1] [These objections are taken up in succession (though not repeated in the text) and answered.]

2 that it is a strange way indeed of convincing men of the obligations of religion, to show them, that they have as little reason for their worldly pursuits: and a strange way of vindicating the justice and goodness of the Author of Nature, and of removing the objections against both, to which the system of religion lies open, to show, that the like objections lie against natural providence; a way of answering objections against religion, without so much as pretending to make out, that the system of it, or the particular things in it objected against, are reasonable——especially, perhaps some may be inattentive enough to add, must this be thought strange, when it is confessed that
4 analogy is no answer to such objections; that when this sort of reasoning is carried to the utmost length it can be imagined capable of, it will yet leave the mind in a very unsatisfied state: and that it must be unaccountable ignorance of mankind, to imagine they will be prevailed with to forego
5 their present interests and pleasures, from regard to religion, upon doubtful evidence."

Now, as plausible as this way of talking may appear, that appearance will be found in a great measure owing to half-views, which show but part of an object, yet show that indistinctly, and to undeterminate language. By these means weak men are often deceived by others, and ludicrous men by themselves. And even those who are serious and considerate, cannot always readily disentangle, and at once clearly see through the perplexities, in which subjects themselves are involved; and which are heightened by the deficiencies and the abuse of words. To this latter sort of persons, the following reply to each part of this objection severally, may be of some assistance; as it may also tend a little to stop and silence others.

First, The thing wanted, *i. e.* what men require, is to have
1 all difficulties cleared. And this is, or, at least for any thing we know to the contrary, it may be, the same, as requiring
a to comprehend the Divine nature, and the whole plan of Providence from everlasting to everlasting. But it hath
b always been allowed to argue, from what is acknowledged, to what is disputed. And it is in no other sense a poor thing, to argue from natural religion to revealed, in the manner found fault with, than it is to argue in numberless

other ways of probable deduction and inference, in matters of conduct, which we are continually reduced to the necessity of doing. Indeed, the epithet *poor* may be applied, I fear, as properly to great part or the whole of human life, as it is to the things mentioned in the objection. Is it not a poor thing, for a physician to have so little knowledge in the cure of diseases, as even the most eminent have? to act upon conjecture and guess, where the life of man is concerned? Undoubtedly it is: but not in comparison of having no skill at all in that useful art, and being obliged to act wholly in the dark.

Further: since it is as unreasonable, as it is common, to urge objections against revelation, which are of equal weight against natural religion; and those who do this, if they are not confused themselves, deal unfairly with others, in making it seem, that they are arguing only against revelation, or particular doctrines of it, when in reality they are arguing against moral providence; it is a thing of consequence to show, that such objections are as much levelled against natural religion as against revealed. And objections, which are equally applicable to both, are properly speaking answered, by its being shown that they are so, provided the former be admitted to be true. And, without taking in the consideration how distinctly this is admitted, it is plainly very material to observe, that as the things objected against in natural religion are of the same kind with what is certain matter of experience in the course of Providence, and in the information which God affords us concerning our temporal interest under his government; so the objections against the system of Christianity, and the evidence of it, are of the very same kind with those which are made against the system and evidence of natural religion. However, the reader upon review may see, that most of the analogies insisted upon, even in the latter part of this treatise, do not necessarily require to have more taken for granted than is in the former; that there is an Author of Nature, or natural Governor of the world: and Christianity is vindicated, not from its analogy to natural religion, but chiefly from its analogy to the experienced constitution of Nature.

Secondly, Religion is a practical thing, and consists in such 2

a determinate course of life, as being what, there is reason to think, is commanded by the Author of Nature, and will, upon
a the whole, be our happiness under his government. Now if men can be convinced, that they have the like reason to believe this, as to believe, that taking care of their temporal affairs will be to their advantage; such conviction cannot but be an argument to them for the practice of religion. And if there be really any reason for believing one of these, and endeavouring to preserve life, and secure ourselves the necessaries and conveniences of it; then there is reason also for believing the other, and endeavouring to secure the interest it proposes to us. And if the interest, which religion proposes to us, be infinitely greater than our whole temporal interest; then there must be proportionably greater reason for endeavouring to secure one, than the other; since, by the supposition, the probability of our securing one is equal to the probability of our securing the other. This seems plainly unanswerable; and has a tendency to influence fair minds, who consider what our condition really is, or upon what evidence we are naturally appointed to act; and who are disposed to acquiesce in the terms upon which we live, and attend to and follow that practical instruction, whatever it be, which is afforded us.

b But the chief and proper force of the argument referred to in the objection, lies in another place. For, it is said that the proof of religion is involved in such inextricable difficulties, as to render it doubtful; and that it cannot be supposed, that, if it were true, it would be left upon doubtful evidence. Here then, over and above the force of each particular difficulty or objection, these difficulties and objections taken together are turned into a positive argument against the truth of religion; which argument would stand thus. If religion were true, it would not be left doubtful, and open to objections to the degree in which it is: therefore that it is thus left, not only renders the evidence of it weak, and lessens its force, in proportion to the weight of such objections; but also shows it to be false, or is a general presumption of its being so. Now the observation, that, from the natural constitution and course of things, we must in our temporal concerns, almost continually, and in matters of great consequence, act upon evidence of a like kind and

degree to the evidence of religion, is an answer to this argument; because it shows, that it is according to the conduct and character of the Author of Nature to appoint we should act upon evidence like to that, which this argument presumes he cannot be supposed to appoint we should act upon: it is an instance, a general one made up of numerous particular ones, of somewhat in his dealing with us, similar to what is said to be incredible. And as the force of this answer lies merely in the parallel which there is between the evidence for religion and for our temporal conduct; the answer is equally just and conclusive, whether the parallel be made out, by showing the evidence of the former to be higher, or the evidence of the latter to be lower.

Thirdly, The design of this treatise is not to vindicate the 3
character of God, but to show the obligations of men; it is not to justify his providence, but to show what belongs to us to do. These are two subjects, and ought not to be confounded. And though they may at length run up into each other, yet observations may immediately tend to make out the latter, which do not appear, by any immediate connexion, to the purpose of the former; which is less our concern than many seem to think. For, first, it is not necessary we should a
justify the dispensations of Providence against objections, any further than to show, that the things objected against may, for aught we know, be consistent with justice and goodness. Suppose then, that there are things in the system of this world, and plan of Providence relating to it, which taken alone would be unjust: yet it has been shown unanswerably, that if we could take in the reference, which these things may have, to other things present, past, and to come; to the whole scheme, which the things objected against are parts of; these very things might, for aught we know, be found to be, not only consistent with justice, but instances of it. Indeed it has been shown, by the analogy of what we see, not only possible that this may be the case, but credible that it is. And thus objections, drawn from such things, are answered, and Providence is vindicated, as far as religion makes its vindication necessary. Hence it appears, secondly, b
that objections against the Divine justice and goodness are not endeavoured to be removed, by showing that the like objections, allowed to be really conclusive, lie against natural

providence: but those objections being supposed and shown not to be conclusive, the things objected against, considered as matters of fact, are further shown to be credible, from their conformity to the constitution of Nature; for instance, that God will reward and punish men for their actions hereafter, from the observation, that he does reward and punish them for their actions here. And this, I apprehend, is of weight. And I add, thirdly, it would be of weight, even
c though those objections were not answered. For, there being the proof of religion above set down; and religion implying several facts; for instance again, the fact last mentioned, that God will reward and punish men for their actions hereafter; the observation, that his present method of government is by rewards and punishments, shows that future fact not to be incredible: whatever objections men may think they have against it, as unjust or unmerciful, according to their notions of justice and mercy; or as improbable from their belief of necessity. I say, *as improbable*; for it is evident no objection against it, *as unjust*, can be urged from necessity; since this notion as much destroys
d injustice, as it does justice. Then, fourthly, Though objections against the reasonableness of the system of religion cannot indeed be answered without entering into consideration of its reasonableness; yet objections against the credibility or truth of it may. Because the system of it is
1 reducible into what is properly matter of fact: and the truth, the probable truth, of facts, may be shown without consideration of their reasonableness. Nor is it necessary, though, in some cases and respects it is highly useful and proper, yet it is not necessary, to give a proof of the reasonableness of every precept enjoined us, and of every particular
2 dispensation of Providence, which comes into the system of religion. Indeed the more thoroughly a person of a right disposition is convinced of the perfection of the Divine nature and conduct, the further he will advance towards that perfection of religion, which St. John speaks of.[2] But the general obligations of religion are fully made out, by
3 proving the reasonableness of the practice of it. And that the practice of religion *is* reasonable, may be shown, though no more could be proved, than that the system of it *may be*

[2] 1 John iv. 18.

for aught we know to the contrary: and even without
ering into the distinct consideration of this. And from
ice, fifthly, it is easy to see, that though the analogy of
ture is not an immediate answer to objections against the
sdom, the justice, or goodness, of any doctrine or precept
religion; yet it may be, as it is, an immediate and direct
swer to what is really intended by such objections; which
to show that the things objected against are incredible.

Fourthly, It is most readily acknowledged, that the fore-
ing treatise is by no means satisfactory; very far indeed
om it: but so would any natural institution of life appear,
reduced into a system, together with its evidence. Leaving
ligion out of the case, men are divided in their opinions,
hether our pleasures overbalance our pains: and whether
be, or be not, eligible to live in this world[3]. And were
ll such controversies settled, which perhaps, in speculation,
ould be found involved in great difficulties; and were it
etermined upon the evidence of reason, as Nature has de-
ermined it to our hands, that life is to be preserved: yet
still, the rules which God has been pleased to afford us, for
escaping the miseries of it, and obtaining its satisfactions,
the rules for instance, of preserving health, and recovering
it when lost, are not only fallible and precarious, but very
far from being exact. Nor are we informed by Nature, in
future contingencies and accidents, so as to render it at all
certain, what is the best method of managing our affairs.
What will be the success of our temporal pursuits, in the
common sense of the word success, is highly doubtful. And
what will be the success of them in the proper sense of the
word; *i. e.* what happiness or enjoyment we shall obtain
by them, is doubtful in a much higher degree. Indeed the
unsatisfactory nature of the evidence, with which we are
obliged to take up, in the daily course of life, is scarce to be
expressed. Yet men do not throw away life, or disregard
the interests of it, upon account of this doubtfulness. The
evidence of religion then being admitted real, those who
object against it, as not satisfactory, *i. e.* as not being what
they wish it, plainly forget the very condition of our being:

[3] [This question is discussed in Bayle's Dict. art. Xenophanes, notes, D, E, F, G. It is instructive to find unbelievers confessing in this way to the vanity of life apart from immortality.]

for satisfaction, in this sense, does not belong to such a b creature as man. And, which is more material, they forget also the very nature of religion. For, religion presupposes, in all those who will embrace it, a certain degree of integrity and honesty; which it was intended to try whether men have or not, and to exercise in such as have it, in order to its improvement. Religion presupposes this as much, and in the same sense, as speaking to a man presupposes he understands the language in which you speak; or as warning a man of any danger presupposes that he hath such a regard to himself, as that he will endeavour to avoid it. And c therefore the question is not at all, Whether the evidence of religion be satisfactory; but Whether it be, in reason, sufficient to prove and discipline that virtue, which it presupposes. Now the evidence of it is fully sufficient for all those purposes of probation; how far soever it is from being satisfactory, as to the purposes of curiosity, or any other: and indeed it answers the purposes of the former in several respects, which it would not do, if it were as overbearing as is required. One might add further; that whether the motives or the evidence for any course of action be satisfactory, meaning here by that word, what satisfies a man, that such a course of action will in event be for his good; this need never be, and I think, strictly speaking, never is, the practical question in common matters. But the practical question in all cases is, Whether the evidence for a course of action be such, as, taking in all circumstances, makes the faculty within us, which is the guide and judge of conduct,[4] determine that course of action to be prudent. Indeed, satisfaction that it will be for our interest or happiness, abundantly determines an action to be prudent: but evidence almost infinitely lower than this, determines actions to be so too; even in the conduct of every day.

5 Fifthly, As to the objection concerning the influence which this argument, or any part of it, may, or may not, be expected to have upon men; I observe, as above, that religion being intended for a trial and exercise of the morality of every person's character, who is a subject of it; and there being,

[4] See Dissert. II. [Clarke uses this argument: 'Evidences, prop. xv. He also cites Arnobius (adv. Gent. lib. 2) to the same effect.]

as I have shown, such evidence for it, as is sufficient, in
reason, to influence men to embrace it; to object, that it is
not to be imagined mankind will be influenced by such evi-
dence, is nothing to the purpose of the foregoing treatise.
For the purpose of it is not to inquire, what sort of creatures
mankind are; but what the light and knowledge, which is a
afforded them, requires they should be: to show how, in
reason, they ought to behave; not how, in fact, they will
behave. This depends upon themselves, and is their own
concern; the personal concern of each man in particular.
And how little regard the generality have to it, experience
indeed does too fully show. But religion, considered as a
probation, has had its end upon all persons, to whom it has b
been proposed with evidence sufficient in reason to influence
their practice: for by this means they have been put into a
state of probation; let them behave as they will in it.[5] And
thus, not only revelation, but reason also, teaches us, that by
the evidence of religion being laid before men, the designs of
Providence are carrying on, not only with regard to those
who will, but likewise with regard to those who will not, be
influenced by it. However, lastly, the objection here referred
to, allows the things insisted upon in this treatise to be of c
some weight: and if so, it may be hoped it will have some
influence. And if there be a probability that it will have
any at all, there is the same reason in kind, though not in
degree, to lay it before men, as there would be, if it were
likely to have a greater influence.

And further, I desire it may be considered, with respect to E
the whole of the foregoing objections, that in this treatise I
have argued upon the principles of others,[6] not my own:

[5] ["If a religious belief is to be with me the same thing as are my moral beliefs; if it is to act as an influence, countervailing other influences; then it must be possible for me to disbelieve. There could not be a Christian in a world constituted as this is, if there were not always room for a man to be an infidel."—*Restoration of Belief*, p. 338.]

[6] By *arguing upon the principles of others*, the reader will observe is meant, not proving any thing *from* those principles, but *notwithstanding* them. Thus religion is proved, not *from* the opinion of necessity, which is absurd; but, *notwithstanding* or *even though* that opinion were admitted to be true.

and have omitted what I think true, and of the utmost importance, because by others thought unintelligible, or not true. Thus I have argued upon the principles of the
1 Fatalists, which I do not believe: and have omitted a thing of the utmost importance which I do believe, the moral fitness and unfitness of actions, prior to all will whatever; which I apprehend as certainly to determine the Divine conduct, as speculative truth and falsehood necessarily determine the Divine judgment. Indeed the principle of liberty, and that of moral fitness, so force themselves upon the mind, that moralists, the ancients as well as moderns, have formed their language upon it. And probably it may appear in mine: though I have endeavoured to avoid it; and, in order to avoid it, have sometimes been obliged to express myself in a manner, which will appear strange to such as do not observe the reason for it: but the general argument here pursued does not at all suppose or proceed upon these principles. Now, these two abstract principles of liberty and
2 moral fitness being omitted, religion can be considered in no other view, than merely as a question of fact: and in this view it is here considered. It is obvious, that Christianity, and the proof of it, are both historical. And even natural religion is properly a matter of fact. For, that there is a righteous Governor of the world, is so: and this proposition contains the general system of natural religion. But then, several abstract truths, and in particular these two principles, are usually taken into consideration in the proof of it: whereas it is here treated of only as a matter of fact. To explain this: that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones, is an abstract truth: but that they appear so to our mind, is only a matter of fact. And this last must have been admitted, if any thing was, by those ancient sceptics, who would not have admitted the former: but pretended to doubt, whether there were any such thing as truth, or whether we could certainly depend upon our faculties of understanding for the knowledge of it in any case. So likewise, that there is, in the nature of things, an original standard of right and wrong in actions, independent upon all will, but which unalterably determines the will of God, to exercise that moral government over the world, which religion teaches, *i. e.* finally and upon the whole to reward

and punish men respectively as they act right or wrong; this assertion contains an abstract truth, as well as matter of fact. But suppose, in the present state, every man, without exception, was rewarded and punished in exact proportion as he followed or transgressed that sense of right and wrong, which God has implanted in the nature of every man: this would not be at all an abstract truth, but only a matter of fact. And though this fact were acknowledged by every one; yet the very same difficulties might be raised as are now, concerning the abstract questions of liberty and moral fitness: and we should have a proof, even the certain one of experience, that the government of the world was perfectly moral, without taking in the consideration of those questions: and this proof would remain, in what way soever they were determined. And thus, God having given mankind a moral faculty, the object of which is actions, and which naturally approves some actions as right, and of good desert, and condemns others as wrong, and of ill desert; that he will, finally and upon the whole, reward the former and punish the latter, is not an assertion of an abstract truth, but of what is as mere a fact, as his doing so at present would be. This future fact I have not indeed proved with the force with which it might be proved, from the principles of liberty and moral fitness; but without them have given a really conclusive practical proof of it, which is greatly strengthened by the general analogy of Nature: a proof easily cavilled at, easily shown not to be demonstrative, for it is not offered as such; but impossible, I think, to be evaded, or answered. And thus the obligations of religion are made out, exclusively of the questions concerning liberty and moral fitness; which have been perplexed with difficulties and abstruse reasonings, as everything may.

Hence therefore may be observed distinctly, what is the 3
force of this treatise. It will be, to such as are convinced of religion upon the proof arising out of the two last-mentioned principles, an additional proof and a confirmation of a
it: to such as do not admit those principles, an original proof of it,[7] and a confirmation of that proof. Those who believe will here find the scheme of Christianity cleared of

P. 123, etc.

objections, and the evidence of it in a peculiar manner strengthened: those who do not believe will at least be shown the absurdity of all attempts to prove Christianity false, the plain undoubted credibility of it, and, I hope, a good deal more.

And thus, though some perhaps may seriously think that analogy, as here urged, has too great stress laid upon it; and ridicule, unanswerable ridicule, may be applied, to show the argument from it in a disadvantageous light: yet there can be no question, but that it is a real one. For religion, both natural and revealed, implying in it numerous facts; analogy, being a confirmation of all facts to which it can be applied, as it is the only proof of most, cannot but be admitted by every one to be a material thing, and truly of weight on the side of religion, both natural and revealed: and it ought to be particularly regarded by such as profess to follow Nature, and to be less satisfied with abstract reasonings.

CONCLUSION.

Whatever account may be given of the strange inattention and disregard, in some ages and countries, to a matter of such importance as religion; it would, before experience, be incredible, that there should be the like disregard in those, who have had the moral system of the world laid before them, as it is by Christianity, and often inculcated upon them: because this moral system carries in it a good degree of evidence for its truth, upon its being barely proposed to our thoughts. There is no need of abstruse reasonings and distinctions, to convince an unprejudiced understanding, that there is a God who made and governs the world, and will judge it in righteousness; though they may be necessary to answer abstruse difficulties, when once such are raised; when the very meaning of those words, which express most intelligibly the general doctrine of religion, is pretended to be uncertain; and the clear truth of the thing itself is obscured by the intricacies of speculation. But to an unprejudiced mind ten thousand thousand instances of design cannot but prove a designer. And it is intuitively manifest, that crea-

tures ought to live under a dutiful sense of their Maker; and that justice and charity must be his laws, to creatures whom he has made social, and placed in society. Indeed the truth of revealed religion, peculiarly so called, is not self-evident, but requires external proof, in order to its being received. Yet inattention, among us, to revealed religion, will be found to imply the same dissolute, immoral temper of mind, as inattention to natural religion: because, when both are laid before us, in the manner they are in Christian countries of liberty, our obligations to inquire into both, and to embrace both upon supposition of their truth, are obligations of the same nature. For, revelation claims to be the voice of God: and our obligation to attend to his voice is surely moral in all cases. And as it is insisted, that its evidence is conclusive, upon thorough consideration of it; so it offers itself to us with manifest obvious appearances of having something more than human in it, and therefore in all reason requires to have its claims most seriously examined into. It is to be added, that though light and knowledge, in what manner soever afforded us, is equally from God; yet a miraculous revelation has a peculiar tendency, from the first principles of our nature, to awaken mankind, and inspire them with reverence and awe: and this is a peculiar obligation, to attend to what claims to be so with such appearances of truth. It is therefore most certain, that our obligations to inquire seriously into the evidence of Christianity, and, upon supposition of its truth, to embrace it, are of the utmost importance, and moral in the highest and most proper sense. Let us then suppose, that the evidence of religion in general, and of Christianity, has been seriously inquired into, by all reasonable men among us. Yet we find many professedly to reject both, upon speculative principles of infidelity. And all of them do not content themselves with a bare neglect of religion, and enjoying their imaginary freedom from its restraints. Some go much beyond this. They deride God's moral government over the world. They renounce his protection, and defy his justice. They ridicule and vilify Christianity, and blaspheme the Author of it; and take all occasions to manifest a scorn and contempt of revelation. This amounts to an active setting themselves against religion; to what

may be considered as a positive principle of irreligion, which they cultivate within themselves, and, whether they intend this effect or not, render habitual, as a good man does the contrary principle. And others, who are not chargeable with all this profligateness, yet are in avowed opposition to religion, as if discovered to be groundless. Now admitting, which is the supposition we go upon, that these persons act upon what they think principles of reason, and otherwise they are not to be argued with; it is really inconceivable, that they should imagine they clearly see the whole evidence of it, considered in itself, to be nothing at all: nor do they pretend this. They are far indeed from having a just notion of its evidence: but they would not say its evidence was nothing, if they thought the system of it, with all its circumstances, were credible, like other matters of science or history. So that their manner of treating it must proceed, either from such kind of objections against all religion, as have been answered or obviated in the former part of this treatise; or else from objections, and difficulties, supposed more peculiar to Christianity. Thus, they entertain prejudices against the whole notion of a revelation, and miraculous interpositions. They find things in Scripture, whether in incidental passages, or in the general scheme of it, which appear to them unreasonable. They take for granted, that if Christianity were true, the light of it must have been more general, and the evidence of it more satisfactory, or rather overbearing: that it must and would have been, in some way, otherwise put and left than it is. Now this is not imagining they see the evidence itself to be nothing, or inconsiderable; but quite another thing. It is being fortified against the evidence, in some degree acknowledged, by thinking they see the system of Christianity, or somewhat which appears to them necessarily connected with it, to be incredible or false; fortified against that evidence, which might, otherwise, make great impression upon them. Or, lastly, if any of these persons are, upon the whole, in doubt concerning the truth of Christianity; their behaviour seems owing to their taking for granted, through strange inattention, that such doubting is, in a manner, the same thing, as being certain against it.

To these persons and to this state of opinion concerning

religion, the foregoing treatise is adapted. For, all the general objections against the moral system of Nature having been obviated, it is shown, that there is not any peculiar presumption at all against Christianity, either considered as not discoverable by reason, or as unlike to what is so discovered; nor any worth mentioning against it as miraculous, if any at all; none, certainly, which can render it in the least incredible. It is shown, that, upon supposition of a Divine revelation, the analogy of Nature renders it beforehand highly credible, I think probable, that many things in it must appear liable to great objections; and that we must be incompetent judges of it, to a great degree. This observation is, I think, unquestionably true, and of the very utmost importance: but it is urged, as I hope it will be understood, with great caution of not vilifying the faculty of reason, which is *the candle of the Lord within us*;[1] though it can afford no light where it does not shine, nor judge where it has no principles to judge upon. The objections here spoken of, being first answered in the view of objections against Christianity as a matter of fact, are in the next place considered as urged more immediately against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of the Christian dispensation. And it is fully made out, that they admit of exactly the like answer, in every respect, to what the like objections against the constitution of Nature admit of: that, as partial views give the appearance of wrong to things, which, upon further consideration and knowledge of their relations to other things, are found just and good; so it is perfectly credible, that the things objected against the wisdom and goodness of the Christian dispensation, may be rendered instances of wisdom and goodness, by their reference to other things beyond our view: because Christianity is a scheme as much above our comprehension, as that of Nature; and, like that, a scheme in which means are made use of to accomplish ends, and which, as is most credible, may be carried on by general laws. And it ought to be attended to, that this is not an answer taken merely or chiefly from our ignorance, but from somewhat positive, which our observation shows us. For to like objections, the like answer is experienced to be just, in number-

[1] Prov. xx. 27.

less parallel cases. The objections against the Christian dispensation, and the method by which it is carried on, having been thus obviated, in general and together; the chief of them are considered distinctly, and the particular things objected to are shown credible, by their perfect analogy, each apart, to the constitution of Nature. Thus, if man be fallen from his primitive state, and to be restored, and infinite wisdom and power engages in accomplishing our recovery: it were to have been expected, it is said, that this should have been effected at once; and not by such a long series of means, and such a various economy of persons and things; one dispensation preparatory to another, this to a further one, and so on through an indefinite number of ages, before the end of the scheme proposed can be completely accomplished; a scheme conducted by infinite wisdom, and executed by almighty power. But now, on the contrary, our finding that everything in the constitution and course of Nature is thus carried on, shows such expectations concerning revelation to be highly unreasonable; and is a satisfactory answer to them, when urged as objections against the credibility, that the great scheme of Providence in the redemption of the world may be of this kind, and to be accomplished in this manner. As to the particular method of our redemption, the appointment of a Mediator between God and man: this has been shown to be most obviously analogous to the general conduct of Nature, *i. e.* the God of Nature, in appointing others to be the instruments of his mercy, as we experienced in the daily course of providence. The condition of this world, which the doctrine of our redemption by Christ presupposes, so much falls in with natural appearances, that heathen moralists inferred it from those appearances: inferred, that human nature was fallen from its original rectitude, and, in consequence of this, degraded from its primitive happiness. Or, however this opinion came into the world, these appearances must have kept up the tradition, and confirmed the belief of it. And as it was the general opinion under the light of Nature, that repentance and reformation, alone and by itself, was not sufficient to do away sin, and procure a full remission of the penalties annexed to it; and as the reason of the thing does not at all lead to any such conclusion: so every day's experience

shows us, that reformation is not, in any sort, sufficient to prevent the present disadvantages and miseries, which, in the natural course of things, God has annexed to folly and extravagance. Yet there may be ground to think, that the punishments, which, by the general laws of Divine government, are annexed to vice, may be prevented: that provision may have been, even originally, made, that they should be prevented by some means or other, though they could not by reformation alone. For we have daily instances of *such mercy*, in the general conduct of Nature: compassion provided for misery,[2] medicines for diseases, friends against enemies. There is provision made, in the original constitution of the world, that much of the natural bad consequences of our follies, which persons themselves alone cannot prevent, may be prevented by the assistance of others; assistance, which Nature enables, and disposes and appoints them to afford. By a method of goodness analogous to this, when the world lay in wickedness, and consequently ruin, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son* to save it: and *he being made perfect by suffering, became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.*[3] Indeed neither reason nor analogy would lead us to think, in particular, that the interposition of Christ, in the manner in which he did interpose, would be of that efficacy for recovery of the world, which the Scripture teaches us it was: but neither would reason nor analogy lead us to think, that other particular means would be of the efficacy, which experience shows they are, in numberless instances. And therefore, as the case before us does not admit of experience; so, that neither reason nor analogy can show how, or in what particular way, the interposition of Christ, as revealed in Scripture, is of that efficacy, which it is there represented to be; this is no kind nor degree of presumption against its being really of that efficacy. Further: the objections against Christianity, from the light of it not being universal, nor its evidence so strong as might possibly be given us, have been answered by the general analogy of Nature. That God has made such variety of creatures, is indeed an answer to the former: but that he dispenses his

[2] Serm. at the Rolls, p. 106. [3] John iii. 16; Heb. v. 9.

gifts in such variety, both of degrees and kinds, amongst creatures of the same species, and even to the same individuals at different times, is a more obvious and full answer to it. And it is so far from being the method of Providence in other cases, to afford us such overbearing evidence, as some require in proof of Christianity; that, on the contrary, the evidence upon which we are naturally appointed to act in common matters, throughout a very great part of life, is doubtful in a high degree. And admitting the fact, that God has afforded to some no more than doubtful evidence of religion; the same account may be given of it, as of difficulties and temptations with regard to practice. But as it is not impossible,[4] surely, that this alleged doubtfulness may be men's own fault; it deserves their most serious consideration, whether it be not so. However, it is certain, that doubting implies a degree of evidence for that of which we doubt; and that this degree of evidence as really lays us under obligations, as demonstrative evidence.

The whole, then, of religion is throughout credible: nor is there, I think, any thing relating to the revealed dispensation of things, more different from the experienced constitution and course of Nature, than some parts of the constitution of Nature are from other parts of it. And if so, the only question which remains is, what positive evidence can be alleged for the truth of Christianity. This too in general has been considered, and the objections against it estimated. Deduct, therefore, what is to be deducted from that evidence, upon account of any weight which may be thought to remain in these objections, after what the analogy of Nature has suggested in answer to them: and then consider, what are the practical consequences from all this, upon the most sceptical principles one can argue upon: (for I am writing to persons who entertain these principles:) and upon such consideration it will be obvious, that immorality, as little excuse as it admits of in itself, is greatly aggravated, in persons who have been made acquainted with Christianity, whether they believe it or not: because the moral system of nature, or natural religion, which Christianity lays before us, approves itself, almost intuitively, to a reasonable mind,

[4] Page 242, etc.

eing it proposed. In the next place, with regard to
nity, it will be observed; that there is a middle
a full satisfaction of the truth of it, and a satis-
of the contrary. The middle state of mind between
vo consists in a serious apprehension, that it may be
ined with doubt whether it be so. And this, upon
st judgment I am able to make, is as far towards
tive infidelity, as any sceptic can at all be supposed
who has had true Christianity, with the proper evi-
of it, laid before him, and has in any tolerable measure
ered them. For I would not be mistaken to com-
d all who have ever heard of it: because it seems
t, that in many countries called Christian, neither
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n places where both are, there appear to be some,
have very little attended to either, and who reject
tianity with a scorn proportionate to their inattention;
yet are by no means without understanding in other
ers. Now it has been shown that a serious apprehen-
that Christianity may be true, lays persons under the
test obligations of a serious regard to it, throughout the
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If this be a just account of things, and yet men can go
to vilify or disregard Christianity, which is to talk and
t as if they had a demonstration of its falsehood; there is
reason to think they would alter their behaviour to any
rpose, though there were a demonstration of its truth.

THE END OF THE SECOND PART.

TWO

BRIEF DISSERTATIONS.

I. OF PERSONAL IDENTITY.

II. OF THE NATURE OF VIRTUE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the first copy of these papers, I had inserted the two following Dissertations into the chapters, *Of a Future Life*, and, *Of the Moral Government of God*; with which they are closely connected. But as they do not directly fall under the *title* of the foregoing Treatise, and would have kept the subject of it too long out of sight, it seemed more proper to place them by themselves.

DISSERTATION I.

OF PERSONAL IDENTITY.

[The question to which this dissertation is devoted is metaphysically of considerable interest. Does each man continue, through his whole existence, the same thinking being; and if so, wherein does the sameness consist, and what is evidence of it? The question is now not often discussed; but in the writings of the last century it was one of the most popular subjects of inquiry.[1]

As the question is generally expressed, it is, unhappily, ambiguous.[2] *Person* or *substance*, for example, may mean, or be taken to include, the material elements of which the body is composed; and as it is known that the human frame is gradually changed every few years, the question whether a man is in this sense, and for seven years together, the same person or substance, must be answered in the negative. It must be noticed also that *sameness* (like identity) is used in two senses. It is *properly* applicable to a single object which we affirm to be not another. In a *secondary* sense it is applied to objects which are very much alike; as when we say that one house is built of the same materials as another, meaning that the materials are of similar quality. In the first sense, sameness does not involve the idea of similarity—"The same person, but how altered!" In the second sense similarity is essential. The secondary sense admits of degrees ("nearly the same"); the proper sense does not.[3]

It is in forgetfulness of this last distinction that some have stated the question to be, whether the thinking being (person or substance) continues to possess like qualities through its whole existence. In fact, men's minds, affections, judgments, all change. A man may even be renewed and still be, in the proper sense, the same man. The question is really, freed from all ambiguities, Does each man continue, through his whole being, the *same* person, or does he become *another*; a question that carries with it its answer.

What constitutes this sameness, and what is its evidence, are questions less easily answered. Clearly, the sameness does not de-

[1] See Martinus Scriblerus, ch. vii.

[2] Shaftesbury's Characteristics, iii. 172, ed. 1745.

[3] Whately's Logic, bk. iv. v. § 1.

pend on the identity of the particles of our bodies, nor even upon the possession of any body. Through life, we have the *same* body; that is, in the secondary sense of same, our bodies are 'natural;' the resurrection (or spiritual) body is not yet given to us: in the proper sense of *same* our bodies are not the same, they are ever changing. Nor does this sameness consist in or depend on our consciousness, as Locke seems to have held. In states of disease or in intemperance a man may lose all consciousness of identity and yet not cease to be the same person. It is true our conviction of personal identity and the idea of it may be obtained through consciousness and memory, as in fact they are, but our identity itself is prior to this consciousness, as (to use Butler's comparison) truth is prior to knowledge. I am now conscious of existence; I am conscious, moreover, of the memory of prior states of existence: I conclude, therefore, instinctively and intuitively, as Butler seems to teach, that the being (or person) in whom this double consciousness inheres is the same being and not another. The evidence is intuitive, and the identity is of the conscious substance or thinking being—not of consciousness, still less of material substance.[4]

The importance of this speculation, as a practical question, in connexion with a future life is obvious. If in that life each moral agent is no longer the same, but another, moral government, in the largest sense, is at an end. That government implies the dependence of the condition of our future selves upon our present behaviour.

It is also worth noting, that the consciousness of mental identity is a presumption, as Dr. T. Brown has intimated, that the mind is not material. It seems free at least from the common quality of all that is material—liability to change and decay.]

["The sameness of person" implied in our living in a future life has created strange difficulties, and stranger solutions of them; ending in the denial that we shall ever enter it. Hence it may be worth considering.

What "personal identity" is, is a question not easily defined. It is clear, however,

1 In relation to consciousness,

That the comparison of two or more acts of consciousness of one's self gives the *idea* of this identity and proves it.

Yet such consciousness does not *make* the identity, nor is it necessary to it.

[4] See Reid's Works, Hamilton's edition, pp. 344 and 350.

of one's self, or one's own existence, in any two moments, there as immediately arises to the mind the idea of personal identity. And as the two former comparisons not only give us the ideas of similitude and equality, but also show us that two triangles are alike, and twice two and four are equal; so the latter comparison not only gives us the idea of personal identity, but also shows us the identity of ourselves in those two moments; the present, suppose, and that immediately past; or the present and that a month, a year, or twenty years past. Or, in other words, by reflecting upon that which is myself now, and that which was myself twenty years ago, I discern they are not two but one and the same self.

But though consciousness of what is past does thus ascertain our personal identity to ourselves, yet to say that it makes personal identity, or is necessary to our being the same persons, is to say that a person has not existed a single moment, nor done one action but what he can remember; indeed none but what he reflects upon. And one should really think it self-evident, that consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity; any more than knowledge, in any other case, can constitute truth which it presupposes.

This wonderful mistake may possibly have arisen from hence; that to be endued with consciousness is inseparable from the idea of a person or intelligent being. For this might be expressed inaccurately thus, that consciousness makes personality; and from hence it might be concluded to make personal identity: but though present consciousness of what we at present do and feel is necessary to our being the persons we now are, yet present consciousness of past actions or feelings is not necessary to our being the same persons who performed those actions, or had those feelings.

[1] [Consciousness refers properly to *present* states of mind. We are not said to be conscious of the past. Strictly speaking, we are conscious of present existence and conscious of the *remembrance* of the past. Butler no doubt thought of this distinction, as towards the end of the treatise he speaks of this second consciousness as a perception of the memory.]

The inquiry, what makes vegetables the same in the com-
mon acceptation of the word, does not appear to have any
relation to this of personal identity; because the word *same*, 2
when applied to them and to person, is not only applied to
different subjects, but it is also used in different senses. For
when a man swears to the same tree as having stood fifty
years in the same place, he means only the same as to all
the purposes of property and uses of common life, and not
that the tree has been all that time the same in the strict
philosophical sense of the word. For he does not know
whether any one particle of the present tree be the same
with any one particle of the tree which stood in the same
place fifty years ago. And if they have not one common
particle of matter, they cannot be the same tree in the proper
philosophic sense of the word *same*; it being evidently a con-
tradiction in terms to say they are, when no part of their
substance, and no one of their properties is the same: no
part of their substance by the supposition; no one of
their properties, because it is allowed that the same property
cannot be transferred from one substance to another. And
therefore when we say the identity or sameness of a plant
consists in a continuation of the same life, communicated
under the same organization, to a number of particles of
matter, whether the same or not; the word *same*, when ap-
plied to life and to organization, cannot possibly be under-
stood to signify what it signifies in this very sentence, when
applied to matter. In a loose and popular sense then the
life and the organization and the plant are justly said to be
the same, notwithstanding the perpetual change of the parts.
But in a strict and philosophical manner of speech, no man,
no being, no mode of being, no anything, can be the same
with that with which it hath indeed nothing the same. Now
sameness is used in this latter sense when applied to persons.
The identity of these, therefore, cannot subsist with diversity
of substance.

The thing here considered and demonstratively, as I think, Consc.
determined, is proposed by Mr. Locke in these words, *Whether
it*, i.e., the same self or person, *be the same identical sub-
stance?* And he has suggested what is a much better answer
to the question, than that which he gives it in form. For he
defines Person *a thinking intelligent being*, etc., and personal

identity *the sameness of a rational being.*[2] The question then is, whether the same rational being is the same substance; which needs no answer, because being and substance, in this place, stand for the same idea. The ground of the doubt, whether the same person be the same substance, is said to be this; that the consciousness of our own existence, in youth and in old age, or in any two joint successive moments, is not the *same individual action*,[3] i. e., not the same consciousness, but different successive consciousnesses. Now it is strange that this should have occasioned such perplexities. For it is surely conceivable, that a person may have a capacity of knowing some object or other to be the same now, which it was when he contemplated it formerly; yet in this case where, by the supposition, the object is perceived to be the same, the perception of it in any two moments cannot be one and the same perception. And thus though the successive consciousnesses which we have of our own existence are not the same, yet they are consciousnesses of one and the same thing or object; of the same person, self, or living agent. The person, of whose existence the consciousness is felt now, and was felt an hour or a year ago, is discerned to be not two persons, but one and the same person; and therefore is one and the same.

Mr. Locke's observations upon this subject appear hasty; and he seems to profess himself dissatisfied with suppositions which he has made relating to it.[4] But some of those hasty

[2] Locke's Works, vol. i. p. 146. [Locke's error in relation to personal identity was not unnatural. From taste, as well as from the precepts of his own philosophy, he was strongly indisposed to speculate on what may be called the nature or substance of the mind itself. We are conscious of past acts (he reasoned) as our own; we admit them, and are responsible for them, whatever the mind be. For practical and moral purposes that admission is enough. The acts, we are conscious, are ours, though done in the past; and so the living agent is the same. This reasoning, though sufficient for his immediate purpose, was soon abused by Collins and others, as Butler proceeds to show. Locke was corrected by Leibnitz, but most fully by Butler.]

[3] Locke, p. 146, 147.

[4] Locke, p. 152. "I am apt to think I have, in treating this subject, made some suppositions that will look strange to some readers, and possibly they are so in themselves."—*Essay*, b. ii. c. 27. s. 27.

observations have been carried to a strange length by others, whose notion, when traced and examined to the bottom, amounts, I think, to this:[5] "That personality is not a permanent but a transient thing; that it lives and dies, begins and ends continually; that no one can any more remain one and the same person two moments together, than two successive moments can be one and the same moment; that our substance is indeed continually changing, but whether this be so or not is, it seems, nothing to the purpose, since it is not substance but consciousness alone which constitutes personality; which consciousness, being successive, cannot be the same in any two moments, nor consequently the personality constituted by it." And from hence it must follow that it is a fallacy upon ourselves, to charge our present selves with any thing we did, or to imagine our present selves interested in any thing which befell us yesterday, or that our present self will be interested in what will befall us to-morrow; since our present self is not, in reality, the same with the self of yesterday, but another like self or person coming in its room, and mistaken for it; to which another self will succeed to-morrow. This, I say, must follow; for if the self or person of to-day, and that of to-morrow, are not the same, but only like persons; the person of to-day is really no more interested in what will befall the person of to-morrow, than in what will befall any other person. It may be thought, perhaps, that this is not a just representation of the opinion we are speaking of; because those who maintain it allow that a person is the same as far back as his remembrance reaches. And indeed they do use the *words, identity* and *same* person. Nor will language permit these words to be laid aside, since if they were there must be I know not what ridiculous periphrasis substituted in the room of them; but they cannot, consistently with themselves, mean that the person is really the same. For it is self-evident that the personality cannot be really the same if, as they expressly assert, that in which it consists is not the same. And as, consistently with themselves, they cannot, so, I think it appears, they do not mean that the person is

[5] See an Answer to Dr. Clarke's Third Defence of his Letter to Mr. Dodwell, 2nd edit. pp. 44. 56, etc.

really the same, but only that he is so in a fictitious sense; in such a sense only as they assert, for this they do assert that any number of persons whatever may be the same person. The bare unfolding this notion, and laying it thus naked and open, seems the best confutation of it. However, since great stress is said to be put upon it I add the following things.

First, this notion is absolutely contradictory to that certain conviction which necessarily and every moment rises within us, when we turn our thoughts upon ourselves, when we reflect upon what is past, and look forward upon what is to come. All imagination of a daily change of that living agent which each man calls himself for another, or of any such change throughout our whole present life, is entirely borne down by our natural sense of things. Nor is it possible for a person in his wits to alter his conduct with regard to his health or affairs, from a suspicion that though he should live to-morrow, he should not, however, be the same person he is to-day. And yet if it be reasonable to act, with respect to a future life, upon this notion, that personality is transient, it is reasonable to act upon it with respect to the present. Here then is a notion equally applicable to religion and to our temporal concerns, and every one sees and feels the inexpressible absurdity of it in the latter case; if, therefore, any can take up with it in the former, this cannot proceed from the reason of the thing, but must be owing to an inward unfairness and secret corruption of heart.

Secondly, it is not an idea or abstract notion, or quality, but a being only, which is capable of life and action, of happiness and misery. Now all beings confessedly continue the same during the whole time of their existence. Consider then a living being now existing, and which has existed for any time alive; this living being must have done and suffered and enjoyed, what it has done and suffered and enjoyed formerly, (this living being, I say, and not another,) as really as it does and suffers and enjoys, what it does and suffers and enjoys this instant. All these successive actions, enjoyments, and sufferings are actions, enjoyments, and sufferings of the same living being. And they are so prior to all consideration of its remembering or forgetting; since remembering or forgetting can make no alteration in the truth of

past matter of fact. And suppose this being endued with limited powers of knowledge and memory, there is no more difficulty in conceiving it to have a power of knowing itself to be the same living being which it was some time ago, of remembering some of its actions, sufferings, and enjoyments, and forgetting others, than in conceiving it to know or remember or forget any thing else.

Thirdly, every person is conscious that he is now the same person or self he was as far back as his remembrance reaches; since when any one reflects upon a past action of his own, he is just as certain of the person who did that action, namely himself, the person who now reflects upon it, as he is certain that the action was at all done. Nay, very often a person's assurance of an action having been done, of which he is absolutely assured, arises wholly from the consciousness that he himself did it. And this he, person, or self, must either be a substance or the property of some substance. If he, if person, be a substance, then consciousness that he is the same person is consciousness that he is the same substance. If the person, or he, be the property of a substance, still consciousness that he is the same property is as certain a proof that his substance remains the same, as consciousness that he remains the same substance would be; since the same property cannot be transferred from one substance to another.[6]

But though we are thus certain that we are the same agents, living beings, or substances now, which we were as far back as our remembrance reaches, yet it is asked whether we may not possibly be deceived in it? And this question may be asked at the end of any demonstration whatever; because it is a question concerning the truth of perception by memory. And he who can doubt whether perception by memory can in this case be depended upon, may doubt also whether perception by deduction and reasoning, which also

[6] [Property, it must be remembered, is defined by the logicians as a peculiar quality of anything essential to it; called, on this ground, an *essential mode*. Butler's reasoning here is open to an objection already intimated (see part i. chap. i. note). It rests too much on a merely verbal definition of the qualities of matter—a subject on which we know too little to deduce from our definitions trustworthy conclusions.]

include memory, or indeed whether intuitive perception can. Here then we can go no further.[7] For it is ridiculous to attempt to prove the truth of those perceptions, whose truth we can no otherwise prove than by other perceptions of
b exactly the same kind with them, and which there is just the same ground to suspect; or to attempt to prove the truth of our faculties, which can no otherwise be proved than by the use or means of those very suspected faculties themselves.

DISSERTATION II.

OF THE NATURE OF VIRTUE.[1]

A [INTRODUCTION.
1 Moral government implies a moral nature and moral faculties.
2 Proofs of the existence of such faculties are various.
3 Nor is there doubt as to the general qualities which those faculties approve, such as veracity, justice, and a regard for the public good.

7 [Butler's reasoning in this chapter has very much the character of Dr. Reid's 'Philosophy,' giving to the instinctive principles of our nature a greater prominence than has often been given them by metaphysicians. This peculiarity, which secured for Reid's followers the title of the "common-sense school" of philosophy, that eminent inquirer owed probably in part to his study of Bacon and Butler, both of whom were favourites with him.]

1 [To appreciate this dissertation, we need to keep in mind the theories in vogue when it was published. Within a hundred years Hobbes had published his theory of Human Nature, in which he taught that personal gratification was the sole end of every act, that every exercise of passion or faculty was equally authoritative, and that man has no moral faculties of perception or action. Cudworth and Clarke held in opposition to this theory that the distinction between right and wrong is eternal, and that the quality of moral acts is discerned by our reason. The first and last parts of Hobbes' theory Butler here refutes; the second he notices in his sermons. He admits, with Clarke, that the distinction between right and wrong is eternal, and that the distinction is

B Note then a few things concerning it.

1 Its object is not events but actions in connexion with principles or character; including therein will and intention without necessary regard to the actual *power* of the agent

2 Our sense of actions as good or bad implies a sense of good or ill desert, which again involves

a That they deserve punishment or reward,

b Irrespective of any mischief or advantage to society; for an innocent action, which is yet mischievous, would be differently regarded.

c Ill desert supposes guilt, and seems necessarily connected with misery.

d In common cases of virtue good desert is thought but small, because little virtue may induce men to act well.

e In vice ill desert is lessened according to the temptation.

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founded on the fitness of things; but with characteristic wisdom he seeks the evidence of this distinction and one foundation for it in human nature. He holds also that our approbation of virtue is not an act of reason simply, but an emotion. His account of the origin of the idea of merit, and of its connexion with a reflex sense, is probably taken from Shaftesbury, to whose 'Characteristics' he frequently refers. By giving prudence a place among the virtues, he opposes Hutcheson, allows whatever of truth is to be found in Hobbes' system, and explains it. By denying that prudence is the whole of virtue, he meets the abuse which Hobbes committed, and which some modern writers have revived. Benevolence he reckons a most important virtue, and yet denies, against Leibnitz, that all virtue is resolvable into it. In his doctrine of a moral sense he agrees substantially with Hutcheson, his contemporary, and in the importance he attaches to the distinction between mere acts and the dispositions or principles from which they spring, he condemns Hobbes and sanctions Malebranche. In his third division he gives an idea of the "fitness of moral acts;" an idea more practical at all events than that of Clarke. His fifth division answers by anticipation the theory of Bentham, that virtue is a regard for the happiness of others; as the dissertation throughout answers the theory of Paley. Of course he maintains that virtue and happiness generally coincide, and in the long run will always coincide—the first parts of the Analogy being largely based on this view; but he denies that happiness or interest can be a rule to us, our rule being, in truth, God's will, as revealed in his word, or in the moral nature he has given.]

3 Ill desert implies a comparison of an act with the capacities of the agent; compare a child or idiot and a man. Unfit, unnatural, describe this perception.

4 Prudence (a reasonable desire to secure happiness) is approved. and imprudence condemned.

a This feeling quite independent of the tendency of imprudence to lessen happiness. We condemn the conduct, while pitying the condition.

b Though not so strenuously condemned as falsehood or cruelty, because (1) imprudence brings immediately its punishment, and is so self-corrective, and (2) then punishment excites pity, which lessens displeasure,

c Still it is condemned.

d Hence prudence is a species of virtue, and imprudence of vice,

e Whether or not we give them these names.

5 Virtue is not wholly benevolence, or vice wholly the opposite; for if they were

a Benevolence would be approved equally to whomever it was shown, and falsehood would be condemned only as injurious.

b To take from one and give to another, so adding to the sum of happiness, would be a virtue, whatever the morality.

c Injustice would be no fault, if it added to the sum of happiness; moreover,

d We are so made that we condemn falsehood, etc., without respect to overbalance of happiness, so that even if benevolence be God's sole end, it is not ours.

e Hence moral government must consist, not in the exercise of benevolence simply, but in treating men according to their moral nature.

f Most, perhaps, agree in these last principles, yet many seem disposed to hold that the whole of vice consists in its tendency to increase misery—a terrible mistake, which if admitted would excuse many flagrant crimes.

g And in truth creatures like men know not what they are about, when they attempt to promote happiness otherwise than through veracity and justice.

h When these are not opposed, however, then benevolence is our duty.

i Caution: though veracity is our rule, this does not forbid *all* acts or words not designed to deceive, nor likely to deceive, but through want of care and thought.]

THAT which renders beings capable of moral government, is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensions: so also are we. But additional to this, we have a capacity of reflecting upon actions and characters, and making them an object to our thought: and on doing this, we naturally and unavoidably approve some actions, under the peculiar view of their being virtuous and of good desert; and disapprove others, as vicious and of ill desert. That we have this moral approving and disapproving[2] faculty, is certain from our experiencing it in ourselves, and recognising it in each other. It appears from our exercising it unavoidably, in the approbation and disapprobation even of feigned characters: from the words, *right* and *wrong*, *odious* and *amiable*, *base* and *worthy*, with many others of like signification in all languages, applied to actions and characters: from the many written systems of morals which suppose it: since it cannot be imagined, that all these authors, throughout all these treatises, had absolutely no meaning at all to their words, or a meaning merely chimerical: from our natural sense of gratitude, which implies a distinction between merely being the instrument of good, and intending it: from the like distinction, every one makes, between injury and mere harm, which, Hobbes says, is peculiar to mankind; and between injury and just punishment, a distinction plainly natural, prior to the consideration of human laws. It is manifest great part of common language, and of common behaviour

[2] This way of speaking is taken from Epictetus, Arr. Epict. l. i. c. i., and is made use of as seeming the most full, and least liable to cavil. And the moral faculty may be understood to have these two epithets, δοκιμαστική (approving), and ἀποδοκιμαστική (disapproving), upon a double account; because, upon a survey of actions, whether before or after they are done, it determines them to be good or evil; and also because it determines itself to be the guide of action and of life, in contradistinction from all other faculties, or natural principles of action: in the very same manner as speculative reason *directly* and naturally judges of speculative truth and falsehood; and at the same time is attended with a consciousness upon *reflection*, that the natural right to judge of them belongs to it.

over the world, is formed upon supposition of such a moral faculty; whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or Divine reason; whether considered as a sentiment of the understanding, or as a perception of the heart; or,
B which seems the truth, as including both.[3] Nor is it at all doubtful in the general, what course of action this faculty, or practical discerning power within us, approves, and what it disapproves. For, as much as it has been disputed wherein virtue consists, or whatever ground for doubt there may be about particulars; yet, in general, there is in reality an universally acknowledged standard of it. It is that, which all ages and all countries have made profession of in public: it is that, which every man you meet puts on the show of: it is that, which the primary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions over the face of the earth make it their business and endeavour to enforce the practice of upon mankind: namely, justice, veracity, and regard to common good. It being manifest, then, in general, that we have such a faculty
B or discernment as this, it may be of use to remark some things more distinctly concerning it.[4]

1 First, It ought to be observed, that the object of this faculty is actions,[5] comprehending under that name active or practical principles: those principles from which men would act, if occasions and circumstances gave them power;

[3] [Dr. Whewell has reversed this expression, and reads "as a perception of the understanding or as a sentiment of the heart" (Butler's Three Sermons, etc., p. 86). But the text is defensible as it stands, and even felicitous. Butler doubts whether to refer conscience to the understanding or to the heart: it has more of feeling than common judgments, and yet more of intelligence than common feeling. He calls it therefore, "a sentiment of the understanding," or "a perception of the heart;" and intimates that both sentiment and perception, or both heart and understanding, are included in it. Professor Fitzgerald notes a similar combination of phrases in Adam Smith's description of Hutcheson's System.—"*Theory of Moral Sentiments,*" Part vi., chap. iii., p. 356.]

[4] [These remarks may be well applied to correct Paley's statements on conscience.—'Moral Philosophy,' Bk. i. chap. v.]

[5] *Οὐδὲ ἡ ἀρετὴ καὶ κακία—ἐν πείσει, ἀλλὰ ἐνεργείᾳ*, M. Anton. lib. ix. 16. Virtutis laus omnis in actione consistit. Cic. Off. lib. i. cap. 6. [Or as Mackintosh expresses it—the objects of this faculty are "the mental dispositions leading to voluntary action, and the

and which, when fixed and habitual in any person, we call his character. It does not appear, that brutes have the least reflex sense of actions, as distinguished from events: or that will and design, which constitute the very nature of actions as such, are at all an object to their perception. But to ours they are; and they are the object, and the only one, of the approving and disapproving faculty. Acting, conduct, behaviour, abstracted from all regard to what is, in fact and event, the consequence of it, is itself the natural object of the moral discernment; as speculative truth and falsehood is of speculative reason. Intention of such and such consequences, indeed, is always included; for it is part of the action itself; but though the intended good or bad consequences do not follow, we have exactly the same sense of the action as if they did. In like manner we think well or ill of characters, abstracted from all consideration of the good or the evil, which persons of such characters have it actually in their power to do. We never, in the moral way, applaud or blame either ourselves or others, for what we enjoy or what we suffer, or for having impressions made upon us which we consider as altogether out of our power; but only for what we do, or would have done, had it been in our power: or for what we leave undone, which we might have done, or would have left undone, though we could have done it.

Secondly, Our sense or discernment of actions as morally 2
good or evil, implies in it a sense or discernment of them as of good or ill desert.[6] It may be difficult to explain this per-

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voluntary actions which flow from these dispositions." It is this position so to speak of the faculty, between motive principles and outward gratification, checking and controlling all those principles, that constitutes the authoritativeness of the faculty and gives it its extensive application. It uses no means, has no outward ends, and is thus the most independent part of our nature.]

[6] [It is perhaps not necessary to point out the fallacy involved in applying the term 'merit' to acts of obedience to God, and thence claiming blessing as right, on the ground of desert. Between man and man, merit implies "a right to receive some good upon the score of some good done, and not due, together with an equivalence or parity of worth between them." Clearly no part of this

ception, so as to answer all the questions which may be asked concerning it; but every one speaks of such and such actions as deserving punishment; and it is not, I suppose, pretended, that they have absolutely no meaning at all to the expression. Now the meaning plainly is not, that we conceive it for the good of society, that the doer of such actions should be made to suffer. For if unhappily it were resolved, that a man, who, by some innocent action, was infected with the plague, should be left to perish, lest, by other people's coming near him, the infection should spread; no one would say he deserved this treatment. Innocence and ill-desert are inconsistent ideas. Ill-desert always supposes guilt; and if one be not part of the other, yet they are evidently and naturally connected in our mind. The sight of a man in misery raises our compassion towards him; and, if this misery be inflicted on him by another, our indignation against the author of it. But when we are informed, that the sufferer is a villain, and is punished only for his treachery or cruelty; our compassion exceedingly lessens, and in many instances our indignation wholly subsides. Now what produces this effect is the conception of that in the sufferer, which we call ill-desert. Upon considering then, or viewing together, our notion of vice and that of misery, there results a third, that of ill-desert. And thus there is in human creatures an association of the two ideas, natural and moral evil, wickedness and punishment. If this association were merely artificial or accidental, it were nothing; but being most unquestionably natural, it greatly concerns us to attend to it, instead of endeavouring to explain it away.

It may be observed further, concerning our perception of good and of ill desert, that the former is very weak with respect to common instances of virtue. One reason of which may be, that it does not appear to a spectator, how far such

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definition can apply to God. *All* obedience is *due* to him: When paid, it is "of his own" we have given him; nor is any *good* conferred on *God* by the gift. Hence there is no intrinsic merit (*i. e.*, nothing that can give of itself a *right* to reward) in any of our acts. The only possible merit which the case admits, is, that we give him what is *due*. See Luke xvii. 10; 'South's Sermons, iii.' Sermon i. In common usage, 'merit' expresses simply praiseworthiness; and 'demerit,' the opposite; 'good and ill desert,' as Butler calls them

instances of virtue proceed from a virtuous principle, or in what degree this principle is prevalent; since a very weak regard to virtue may be sufficient to make men act well in many common instances. And on the other hand, our perception of ill-desert in vicious actions lessens, in proportion to the temptations men are thought to have had to such vices. For, vice in human creatures consisting chiefly in the absence or want of the virtuous principle; though a man be overcome, suppose, by tortures, it does not from thence appear to what degree the virtuous principle was wanting. All that appears is, that he had it not in such a degree, as to prevail over the temptation; but possibly he had it in a degree, which would have rendered him proof against common temptations.

Thirdly, Our perception of vice and ill-desert arises from, 3
and is the result of, a comparison of actions with the nature and capacities of the agent. For the mere neglect of doing what we ought to do would, in many cases, be determined by all men to be in the highest degree vicious. And this determination must arise from such comparison, and be the result of it; because such neglect would not be vicious in creatures of other natures and capacities, as brutes. And it is the same also with respect to positive vices, or such as consist in doing what we ought not. For, every one has a different sense of harm done by an idiot, madman, or child, and by one of mature and common understanding; though the action of both, including the intention, which is part of the action, be the same; as it may be, since idiots and madmen, as well as children, are capable not only of doing mischief, but also of intending it. Now this difference must arise from somewhat discerned in the nature or capacities of one, which renders the action vicious; and the want of which, in the other, renders the same action innocent or less vicious; and this plainly supposes a comparison, whether reflected upon or not, between the action and capacities of the agent, previous to our determining an action to be vicious. And hence arises a proper application of the epithets, *incongruous*, *unsuitable*, *disproportionate*, *unfit*, to actions which our moral faculty determines to be vicious.

Fourthly, It deserves to be considered, whether men are 4
more at liberty, in point of morals, to make themselves

miserable without reason than to make other people so or dissolutely to neglect their own greater good, for the
a sake of a present lesser gratification, than they are to neglect the good of others, whom Nature has committed to their care. It should seem, that a due concern about our own interest or happiness, and a reasonable endeavour to secure and promote it, which is, I think, very much the meaning of the word *prudence*, in our language; it should seem, that this is virtue, and the contrary behaviour faulty and blameable; since, in the calmest way of reflection, we approve of the first, and condemn the other conduct, both in ourselves
b and others. This approbation and disapprobation are altogether different from mere desire of our own, or of their happiness, and from sorrow upon missing it. For the object or occasion of this last kind of perception is satisfaction or uneasiness: whereas the object of the first is active behaviour. In one case, what our thoughts fix upon is our condition: in the other, our conduct. It is true indeed, that Nature has not given us so sensible a disapprobation of imprudence and folly, either in *ourselves* or *others*, as of falsehood, injustice, and cruelty: I suppose, because that constant habitual sense of private interest and good, which we always
1 carry about with us, renders such sensible disapprobation less necessary, less wanting, to keep us from imprudently neglecting our own happiness, and foolishly injuring ourselves, than it is necessary and wanting to keep us from injuring others, to whose good we cannot have so strong and constant a regard: and also because imprudence and folly, appearing to bring its own punishment more immediately and constantly than injurious behaviour, it less needs the additional punishment, which would be inflicted upon it by others, had they the same sensible indignation against it, as against injustice, and fraud, and cruelty. Besides, unhappiness being in itself the natural object of compassion; the
2 unhappiness which people bring upon themselves, though it be wilfully, excites in us some pity for them: and this of course lessens our displeasure against them. But still it is matter of experience, that we are formed so as to reflect
c very severely upon the greater instances of imprudent neglects and foolish rashness, both in ourselves and others. In instances of this kind, men often say of themselves with

remorse, and of others with some indignation, that they deserved to suffer such calamities, because they brought them upon themselves, and would not take warning. Particularly when persons come to poverty and distress by a long course of extravagance, and after frequent admonitions, though without falsehood or injustice; we plainly do not regard such people as alike objects of compassion with those, who are brought into the same condition by unavoidable accidents. From these things it appears, that prudence is a species of virtue, and folly of vice: meaning by *folly*, somewhat quite different from mere incapacity; a thoughtless want of that regard and attention to our own happiness, which we had capacity for. And this the word properly includes; and, as it seems, in its usual acceptation: for we scarce apply it to brute creatures.

However, if any person be disposed to dispute the matter, I shall very willingly give him up the words virtue and vice, as not applicable to prudence and folly; but must beg leave to insist, that the faculty within us, which is the judge of actions, approves of prudent actions, and disapproves imprudent ones; I say prudent and imprudent *actions* as such, and considered distinctly from the happiness or misery which they occasion. And, by the way, this observation may help to determine what justness there is in that objection against religion, that it teaches us to be interested and selfish.

Fifthly, Without inquiring how far, and in what sense, virtue is resolvable into benevolence, and vice into want of it: it may be proper to observe that benevolence, and the want of it, singly considered, are in no sort the whole of virtue and vice. For if this were the case, in the review of one's own character or that of others, our moral understanding and moral sense would be indifferent to everything but the degrees in which benevolence prevailed and the degrees in which it was wanting. That is, we should neither approve of benevolence to some persons rather than to others, nor disapprove injustice and falsehood upon any other account, than merely as an overbalance of happiness was foreseen likely to be produced by the first and of misery by the second. But now, on the contrary, suppose two men competitors for anything whatever, which would be of

equal advantage to each of them; though nothing indeed would be more impertinent, than for a stranger to busy himself to get one of them preferred to the other; yet such endeavour would be virtue, in behalf of a friend or benefactor, abstracted from all consideration of distant consequences; as that example of gratitude and the cultivation of friendship would be of general good to the world. Again,
b suppose one man should by fraud or violence take from another the fruit of his labour, with intent to give it to a third, who he thought would have as much pleasure from it as would balance the pleasure which the first possessor would have had in the enjoyment, and his vexation in the loss of it: suppose also that no bad consequences would follow, yet such an action would surely be vicious. Nay
c further, were treachery, violence, and injustice no otherwise vicious than as foreseen likely to produce an overbalance of misery to society; then, if in any case a man could procure to himself as great advantage by an act of injustice, as the whole foreseen inconvenience, likely to be brought upon others by it, would amount to; such a piece of injustice would not be faulty or vicious at all, because it would be no more than in any other case, for a man to prefer his own satisfaction to another's in equal degrees. The fact then appears
d to be, that we are constituted so as to condemn falsehood, unprovoked violence, injustice, and to approve of benevolence to some preferably to others, abstracted from all consideration which conduct is likeliest to produce an overbalance of happiness or misery.[7] And therefore, were the Author of Nature to propose nothing to himself as an end but the production of happiness, were his moral character merely that of benevolence, yet ours is not so. Upon that supposition indeed the only reason of his giving us the above-mentioned approbation of benevolence to some persons rather than others, and disapprobation of falsehood, unprovoked violence, and injustice, must be, that he foresaw this constitution of our nature would produce more happiness, than forming us with a temper of mere general benevolence. But still, since this is our constitution, falsehood, violence,

[7] [This remark was probably suggested by Mandeville's theory (see p. 59), and answers by anticipation the theory of Paley.]

injustice, must be vice in us, and benevolence to some, preferably to others, virtue; abstracted from all consideration of the overbalance of evil or good, which they may appear likely to produce.

Now if human creatures are endued with such a moral nature as we have been explaining[8], or with a moral faculty, the natural object of which is actions; moral government must consist in rendering them happy and unhappy, in rewarding and punishing them, as they follow, neglect, or depart from, the moral rule of action interwoven in their nature, or suggested and enforced by this moral faculty;" in rewarding and punishing them upon account of their so doing.

[8] [Compare with this passage on the danger of making utility or benevolence our rule, the statements at the end of Sermon iii. From the two passages we may learn the peculiarity in this respect of Butler's system. He held, as did Paley, that all virtue *is* conducive both to individual and to general happiness, *always* really useful, and in the end, obviously useful. But he strenuously denies that utility is the quality in acts for which we deem them virtuous; or that the utility of an act is any satisfactory rule (with us) to decide whether it ought to be performed. The apparent exceptions to this statement are not few, and it will be remembered that Paley bases his entire system of ethics on the usefulness of acts, and shows that rules so framed agree in the main with those founded on other principles. Butler himself reasons against revenge, on the ground that it would soon, if indulged, destroy society; *i. e.*, he proves the duty of the forgiveness of injuries (Sermon ix.) by referring, not to conscience, but to the consequences of retaliation. The following facts, however, need to be remembered, and it will be found that they explain the whole. (1.) In some cases the morality of an act is, apart from its results, indifferent: of two such acts (equally innocent) the one that effects most good in the result is for that reason to be preferred. But clearly it does not follow that utility is the rule of acts in *themselves moral*. (2.) On some questions the rule that ought to guide conscience is not clear. She needs teaching; and the appeal is either to Scripture, or if Scripture is inaccessible, or there are doubts as to its meaning, to the consequences of acts. Such cases, however, are comparatively rare, and the only conclusion they justify is, that duty may sometimes be decided, even in moral acts, by studying results. (3.) In all such cases, however, and in every other, the utility is not directly the ground of moral obligation.

I am not sensible that I have, in this fifth observation, contradicted what any author designed to assert. But some of great and distinguished merit have, I think, expressed themselves in a manner which may occasion some danger, to careless readers, of imagining the whole of virtue to consist in singly aiming, according to the best of their judgment, at promoting the happiness of mankind in the present state; and the whole of vice, in doing what they foresee, or might foresee, is likely to produce an overbalance of unhappiness in it; than which mistakes, none can be conceived more terrible.[9] For it is certain, that some of the most shocking instances of injustice, adultery, murder, perjury, and even of persecution, may, in many supposable cases, not have the appearance of being likely to produce an overbalance of misery in the present state; perhaps sometimes may have the contrary appearance. For this reflection might easily be carried on, but I forbear. The happiness of the world is the concern of him, who is the lord and the proprietor of it; nor do we know what we are about, when we endeavour to promote the good of mankind in any ways but those which he has directed; that is, indeed, in all ways not contrary to veracity and justice. I speak thus upon supposition of persons really endeavouring, in some sort, to do good without regard to these. But the truth seems to be, that such supposed endeavours proceed, almost always, from ambition, the spirit of party, or some indirect principle, concealed, perhaps, in great measure from persons themselves. And though it is our business and our duty to endeavour, within the bounds of veracity and justice, to contribute to the ease, convenience, and even cheerfulness and diversion of our fellow-creatures; yet, from our short views, it is greatly uncertain, whether this endeavour will, in particular instances, produce an overbalance of happiness upon the whole; since so many and distant things must come into the

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The utility shows what *God's will* is, and on that will (or on what is right) our obligation rests. To do a thing because it is *useful* is one thing; to do a thing because it is right, every one feels to be *another*. The theory that makes utility identical with morality—not coincident simply—confounds the two.]

[9] Page 125.

account And that which makes it our duty is, that there is some appearance that it will, and no positive appearance sufficient to balance this, on the contrary side; and also, that such benevolent endeavour is a cultivation of that most excellent of all virtuous principles, the active principle of benevolence.

However, though veracity, as well as justice, is to be our rule of life, it must be added, otherwise a snare will be laid in the way of some plain men, that the use of common forms of speech, generally understood, cannot be falsehood; and, in general, that there can be no designed falsehood without designing to deceive. It must likewise be observed, that in numberless cases, a man may be under the strictest obligations to what he foresees will deceive without his intending it. For it is impossible not to foresee, that the words and actions of men, in different ranks and employments, and of different educations, will perpetually be mistaken by each other; and it cannot but be so, whilst they will judge with the utmost carelessness, as they daily do, of what they are not, perhaps, enough informed to be competent judges of, even though they considered it with great attention.[10]

[10] [Connecting this Dissertation with the three Sermons on Human Nature, and with the 1st chapter of the 2nd part of the Analogy, we have a fairly complete view of Butler's ethical system. Sir J. Mackintosh has noticed a distinction of great importance in all ethical discussions: what is the quality in any act which induces men to pronounce it virtuous is *one* question; what is the nature of the feelings with which they regard it is altogether another. Sir James deems it a deficiency in Butler's system that he has not given an answer to the first question, though to the second his answer is complete. If, however, we compare the passages indicated above, it will be found that the historian of modern ethics is hardly just to our author. Butler affirms repeatedly, that the characteristic quality of a moral act is *not* its utility, though the act is always useful; it is rather its harmony with the relations in which men stand (Anal. pt. ii. ch. 1), as when we say that gratitude is what is due to a benefactor; or its suitableness to their nature, or its intrinsic veracity or justness, its rightness or wrongness, or its agreement with the will and character of God. If it be said that he has not clearly defined the quality, it must be answered, that neither has modern inquiry, which is even disposed to regard the quality as itself not further definable, (see Wayland,

p. 44), and that, above all, he insists everywhere on the existence of this quality in all moral acts, quite independently of their tendencies. That Mackintosh has overlooked this dissertation and the ethical discussions of the Analogy is not probable; but certainly Butler has set forth the "Criterion of Morality" more clearly than the historian supposed. On Butler's "Theory of Moral Sentiments," see note at the end of the Sermon iii.]

FIFTEEN SERMONS

PREACHED AT THE CHAPEL OF THE ROLLS COURT.

UPON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

BY JOSEPH BUTLER, LL.D.

THE

PREFACE.

Though it is scarce possible to avoid judging, in some way or other, of almost every thing which offers itself to one's thoughts; yet it is certain that many persons, from different causes, never exercise their judgment, upon what comes before them, in the way of determining whether it be conclusive and holds. They are perhaps entertained with some things, not so with others; they like and they dislike: but whether that which is proposed to be made out, be really made out or not; whether a matter be stated according to the real truth of the case, seems to the generality of people merely a circumstance of no consideration at all. Arguments are often wanted for some accidental purpose: but proof as such is what they never want for themselves; for their own satisfaction of mind, or conduct in life. Not to mention the multitudes who read merely for the sake of talking, or to qualify themselves for the world, or some such kind of reasons; there are, even of the few who read for their own entertainment, and have a real curiosity to see what is said, several of which is prodigious, who have no sort of curiosity to see what is true: I say curiosity; because it is too obvious to be mentioned, how much that religious and sacred attention, which is due to truth, and to the important question, what is the rule of life, is lost out of the world.

For the sake of this whole class of readers, for they are of different capacities, different kinds, and get into this way from different occasions, I have often wished, that it had been the custom to lay before people nothing in matters of argument but premises, and leave them to draw conclusions themselves; which, though it could not be done in all cases, might in many

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The great number of books and papers of amusement, which, of one kind or another, daily come in one's way, have in part occasioned, and most perfectly fall in with, and humour, this idle way of reading and considering things. By this means, time even in solitude is happily got rid of, without the pain of attention: neither is any part of it more put to the account of idleness, one can scarce forbear saying, is spent with less thought, than great part of that which is spent in reading.

Thus people habituate themselves to let things pass through their minds, as one may speak, rather than to think of them. Thus by use they become satisfied merely with seeing what is said, without going any further. Review and attention, and even forming a judgment, becomes fatigue; and to lay any thing before them that requires it, is putting them quite out of their way.

There are also persons, and there are at least more of them than have a right to claim such superiority, who take for granted, that they are acquainted with everything; and that no subject if treated in the manner it should be, can be treated in any manner but what is familiar and easy to them.

It is true indeed, that few persons have a right to demand attention; but it is also true, that nothing can be understood without that degree of it, which the very nature of the thing requires. Now morals, considered as a science, concerning which speculative difficulties are daily raised, and treated with regard to those difficulties, plainly require a very peculiar attention. For here ideas never are in themselves determinate, but become so, by the train of reasoning and the place they stand in; since it is impossible that words can always stand for the same ideas, even in the same author, much less in different ones. Hence an argument may not readily be apprehended, which is different from its being mistaken; and even caution to avoid, being mistaken, may, in some cases, render it less readily apprehended. It is very unallowable for a work of imagination or entertainment not to be of easy comprehension, but may be unavoidable in a work of another kind, where a man is not to form or accommodate, but to state things as he finds them.

It must be acknowledged that some of the following discourses are very abstruse and difficult; or, if you please, obscure: but I must take leave to add, that those alone are judges, whether or no and how far this is a fault, who are judges, whether or no and how far it might have been avoided —those only who will be at the trouble to understand what is here said, and to see how far the things here insisted upon and not other things, might have been put in a plainer manner; which yet I am very far from asserting that they could not.

Thus much however will be allowed, that general criticisms concerning obscurity considered as a distinct thing from confusion and perplexity of thought, as in some cases there may be ground for them; so in others, they may be nothing more at the bottom than complaints, that everything is not to be understood with the same ease that some things are. Confusion and perplexity in writing, is indeed without excuse, because any one may, if he pleases, know whether he understands and sees through what he is about: and it is unpardonable for a man to lay his thoughts before others, when he is conscious that he himself does not know whereabouts he is, or how the matter before him stands. It is coming abroad in disorder, which he ought to be dissatisfied to find himself in at home.

But even obscurities arising from other causes than the abstruseness of the argument, may not be always inexcusable. Thus a subject may be treated in a manner, which all along supposes the reader acquainted with what has been said upon it, both by ancient and modern writers; and with what is the present state of opinion in the world concerning such subject. This will create a difficulty of a very peculiar kind, and even throw an obscurity over the whole before those who are not thus informed; but those who are, will be disposed to excuse such a manner, and other things of the like kind, as a saving of their patience.

However upon the whole, as the title of sermons gives some right to expect what is plain and of easy comprehension, and as the best auditories are mixed, I shall not set about to justify the propriety of preaching, or under that title publishing, discourses so abstruse as some of these are

neither is it worth while to trouble the reader with the account of my doing either. He must not however impute to me, as a repetition of the impropriety, this second edition[1], but to the demand for it.

Whether he will think he has any amends made him, by the following illustrations of what seemed most to require them, I myself am by no means a proper judge.

[i. ii. iii.] There are two ways in which the subject of morals may be treated. One begins from inquiring into the abstract relations of things: the other from a matter of fact, namely, what the particular nature of man is, its several parts, their economy or constitution; from whence it proceeds to determine what course of life it is, which is correspondent to this whole nature. In the former method, the conclusion is expressed thus, that vice is contrary to the nature and reason of things: in the latter, that it is a violation or breaking in upon our own nature. Thus they both lead us to the same thing, our obligations to the practice of virtue; and thus they exceedingly strengthen and enforce each other. The first seems the most direct formal proof, and in some respects the least liable to cavil and dispute: the latter is in a peculiar manner adapted to satisfy a fair mind; and is more easily applicable to the several particular relations and circumstances in life.

The following discourses proceed chiefly in this latter method. The first three wholly. They were intended to explain what is meant by the nature of man, when it is said that virtue consists in following, and vice in deviating from it; and by explaining to show that the assertion is true. That the ancient moralists had some inward feeling or other, which they chose to express in this manner, that man is born to virtue, that it consists in following nature, and that vice is more contrary to this nature than tortures or death, their works in our hands are instances. Now a person who found no mystery in this way of speaking of the ancients; who without being very explicit with himself, kept to his natural feeling, went along with them, and found within himself a full conviction that what they laid down was just

[1] The Preface stands exactly as it did before the second edition of the Sermons.

and true; such a one would probably wonder to see a po... in which he never perceived any difficulty, so labour them. this is, in the second and third sermons; insomuch pof ex- as to be at a loss for the occasion, scope and drift of y car- But it need not be thought strange that this manner would pression, though familiar with them, and, if not usuall daily ried so far, yet not uncommon amongst ourselves, sh first want explaining; since there are several perceptions per- felt and spoken of, which yet it may not be very easy at any view to explicate, to distinguish from all others, and as so tain exactly what the idea or perception is. The moral treatises upon the passions are a proof of this; since a- many would never have undertaken to unfold their severa complications, and trace and resolve them into their prin ciples, if they had thought what they were endeavouring t. show was obvious to every one who felt and talked of those passions. Thus, though there seem no ground to doubt, but that the generality of mankind have the inward perception expressed so commonly in that manner by the ancient moralists, more than to doubt whether they have those passions; yet it appeared of use to unfold that inward conviction, and lay it open in a more explicit manner than I had seen done; especially when there were not wanting persons who manifestly mistook the whole thing, and so had great reason to express themselves dissatisfied with it. A late author of great and deserved reputation says, that to place virtue in following Nature, is at best a loose way of talk. And he has reason to say this, if what I think he intends to express, though with great decency, be true, that scarce any other sense can be put upon those words, but acting as any of the several parts without distinction, of a man's nature happened most to incline him.[2]

Whoever thinks it worth while to consider this matter thoroughly, should begin with stating to himself exactly the idea of a system, economy, or constitution of any particular nature, or particular anything; and he will, I suppose, find that it is a one or a whole, made up of several parts; but yet, that the several parts even considered as a whole, do not complete the idea, unless in the notion of a whole, you in

[2] Rel. of Nature Delin. Ed. 1724. P. 22, 23.

[illegible]lude the relations and respects which those parts have to [illegible]h other. Every work, both of Nature and of art, is a system; [illegible]d as every particular thing, both natural and artificial, is for some use or purpose out of and beyond itself, one may add to what has been already brought into the idea of a system, its conduciveness to this one or more ends. Let us instance in a watch; suppose the several parts of it taken to pieces and placed apart from each other; let a man have ever so exact a notion of these several parts, unless he considers the respects and relations which they have to each other, he will not have anything like the idea of a watch. Suppose these several parts brought together and anyhow united; neither will he yet, be the union ever so close, have an idea which will bear any resemblance to that of a watch. But let him view those several parts put together, or consider them as to be put together in the manner of a watch; let him form a notion of the relations which those several parts have to each other, all conducive in their respective ways to this purpose, showing the hour of the day; and then he has the idea of a watch. Thus it is with regard to the inward frame of a man. Appetites, passions, affections, and the principle of reflection, considered merely as the several parts of our inward nature, do not at all give us an idea of the system or constitution of this nature; because the constitution is formed by somewhat not yet taken into consideration, namely by the relation, which these several parts have to each other; the chief of which is the authority of reflection or conscience. It is from considering the relations which the several appetites and passions in the inward frame have to each other, and above all the supremacy of reflection or conscience, that we get the idea of the system or constitution of human nature; and from the idea itself it will as fully appear, that this our nature, *i. e.* constitution, is adapted to virtue, as from the idea of a watch it appears that its nature, *i. e.* constitution or system, is adapted to measure time. What in fact or event commonly happens, is nothing to this question. Every work of art is apt to be out of order; but this is so far from being according to its system, that let the disorder increase, and it will totally destroy it. This is merely by way of explanation, what an economy, system or constitution is; and thus far the cases

are perfectly parallel. If we go further there is indeed difference, nothing to the present purpose, but too importan a one ever to be omitted. A machine is inanimate an passive, but we are agents. Our constitution is put in ou own power; we are charged with it, and therefore are ac countable for any disorder or violation of it.

Thus nothing can possibly be more contrary to natur than vice; meaning by nature, not only *the several parts* o our internal frame, but also the *constitution* of it. Povert and disgrace, tortures and death are not so contrary to i Misery and injustice are indeed equally contrary to som different parts of our nature taken singly; but injustice moreover contrary to the whole constitution of the nature.

If it be asked whether this constitution be really wha those philosophers meant, and whether they would hav explained themselves in this manner; the answer is th same, as if it should be asked, whether a person who ha often used the word resentment and felt the thing, woul have explained this passion exactly in the same manner, which it is done in one of these discourses. As I have doubt, but that this is a true account of that passion, whic he referred to, and intended to express by the word resen ment; so I have no doubt, but that this is the true accou of the ground of that conviction which they referred t when they said, vice was contrary to nature. And thoug it should be thought that they meant no more than, th vice was contrary to the higher and better part of o nature; even this implies such a constitution as I ha endeavoured to explain. For the very terms higher a better imply a relation or respect of parts to each othe and these relative parts, being in one and the same natu form a constitution and are the very idea of it. They h a perception that injustice was contrary to their nature, a that pain was so also. They observed these two perceptio totally different, not in degree, but in kind; and the refle ing upon each of them as they thus stood in their natu wrought a full intuitive conviction, that more was due a of right belonged to one of these inward perceptions, th to the other; that it demanded in all cases to govern su a creature as man. So that upon the whole, this is a f and true account of what was the ground of their convictio

of what they intended to refer to when they said, virtue consisted in following nature; a manner of speaking not loose and undeterminate, but clear and distinct, strictly just and true.

Though I am persuaded the force of this conviction is felt by almost every one, yet since, considered as an argument and put in words, it appears somewhat abstruse, and since the connexion of it is broken in the first three sermons, it may not be amiss to give the reader the whole argument here in one view.

Mankind has various instincts and principles of action, as brute creatures have; some leading most directly and immediately to the good of the community, and some most directly to private good.

Man has several which brutes have not: particularly reflection or conscience, an approbation of some principles or actions, and disapprobation of others.

Brutes obey their instincts or principles of action, according to certain rules; suppose the constitution of their body, and the objects around them.

The generality of mankind also obey their instincts and principles, all of them; those propensions we call good, as well as the bad, according to the same rules, namely, the constitution of their body, and the external circumstances which they are in. [Therefore it is not a true representation of mankind, to affirm that they are wholly governed by self-love, the love of power, and sensual appetites; since, as on the one hand, they are often actuated by these, without any regard to right or wrong; so on the other, it is manifest fact, that the same persons, the generality, are frequently influenced by friendship, compassion, gratitude; and even a general abhorrence of what is base, and liking of what is fair and just, takes its turn amongst the other motives of action. This is the partial inadequate notion of human nature treated of in the first discourse; and it is by this nature, if one may speak so, that the world is in fact influenced, and kept in that tolerable order, in which it is.]

Brutes in acting according to the rules before-mentioned, their bodily constitution and circumstances, act suitably to their whole nature. [It is, however, to be distinctly noted, that the reason why we affirm this, is not merely that

brutes in fact act so; for this alone, however universal, does not at all determine, whether such course of action be correspondent to their whole nature; but the reason of the assertion is, that as in acting thus they plainly act conformably to somewhat in their nature, so from all observations we are able to make upon them, there does not appear the least ground to imagine them to have anything else in their nature, which requires a different rule or course of action.]

Mankind also in acting thus would act suitably to their whole nature, if no more were to be said of man's nature, than what has been now said; if that, as it is a true, were also a complete, adequate account of our nature.

But that is not a complete account of man's nature. Somewhat further must be brought in to give us an adequate notion of it; namely, that one of those principles of action, conscience, or reflection, compared with the rest as they all stand together in the nature of man, plainly bears upon it marks of authority over all the rest, and claims the absolute direction of them all, to allow or forbid their gratification; a disapprobation of reflection being in itself a principle manifestly superior to a mere propension. And the conclusion is, that to allow no more to this superior principle or part of our nature, than to other parts; to let it govern and guide only occasionally in common with the rest, as its turn happens to come, from the temper and circumstances one happens to be in; this is not to act conformably to the constitution of man; neither can any human creature be said to act conformably to his constitution of nature, unless he allows to that superior principle the absolute authority which is due to it. And this conclusion is abundantly confirmed from hence, that one may determine what course of action the economy of man's nature requires, without so much as knowing in what degree of *strength* the several principles prevail, or which of them have actually the greatest influence.

The practical reason of insisting so much upon this natural authority of the principle of reflection or conscience is, that it seems in great measure overlooked by many, who are by no means the worse sort of men. It is thought sufficient to abstain from gross wickedness, and to be humane and kind to such as happen to come in their way. Whereas in reality the

very constitution of our nature requires, that we bring our whole conduct before this superior faculty; wait its determination, enforce upon ourselves its authority, and make it the business of our lives, as it is absolutely the whole business of a moral agent, to conform ourselves to it. This is the true meaning of that ancient precept, *Reverence thyself.*

The not taking into consideration this authority, which is implied in the idea of reflex approbation or disapprobation, seems a material deficiency or omission in *Lord Shaftesbury's Inquiry concerning Virtue.* He has shown beyond all contradiction that virtue is naturally the interest or happiness, and vice the misery of such a creature as man, placed in the circumstances which we are in this world. But suppose there are particular exceptions; a case which this author was unwilling to put, and yet surely it is to be put; or suppose a case which he has put and determined, that of a sceptic not convinced of this happy tendency of virtue, or being of a contrary opinion. His determination is, that it would be *without remedy.*[3] One may say more explicitly that leaving out the authority of reflex approbation or disapprobation, such a one would be under an obligation to act viciously; since interest, one's own happiness, is a manifest obligation, and there is not supposed to be any other obligation in the case. "But does it much mend the matter, to take in that natural authority of reflection? there indeed would be an obligation to virtue; but would not the obligation from supposed interest on the side of vice remain?" If it should, yet to be under two contrary obligations, *i. e.* under none at all, would not be exactly the same, as to be under a formal obligation to be vicious, or to be in circumstances in which the constitution of man's nature plainly required that vice should be preferred. But the obligation on the side of interest really does not remain. For the natural authority of the principle of reflection, is an obligation the most near and intimate, the most certain and known; whereas the contrary obligation can at the utmost appear no more than probable; since no man can be *certain* in any circumstances that vice is his interest in the present world, much less can

[3] Characteristics, vol. ii., p. 69.

he be certain against another; and thus the certain obligation would entirely supersede and destroy the uncertain one; which yet would have been of real force without the former.

In truth the taking in this consideration, totally changes the whole state of the case; and shows what this author does not seem to have been aware of, that the greatest degree of scepticism which he thought possible, will still leave men under the strictest moral obligations, whatever their opinion be concerning the happiness of virtue. For that mankind upon reflection felt an approbation of what was good, and disapprobation of the contrary, he thought a plain matter of fact, as it undoubtedly is, which none could deny, but from mere affectation. Take in then that authority and obligation, which is a constituent part of this reflex approbation, and it will undeniably follow, though a man should doubt of everything else, yet that he would still remain under the nearest and most certain obligation to the practice of virtue; an obligation implied in the very idea of virtue, in the very idea of reflex approbation.

And how little influence soever this obligation alone can be expected to have in fact upon mankind, yet one may appeal even to interest and self-love, and ask, since from man's nature, condition, and the shortness of life, so little, so very little indeed, can possibly in any case be gained by vice; whether it be so prodigious a thing to sacrifice that little, to the most intimate of all obligations; and which a man cannot transgress without being self-condemned, and, unless he has corrupted his nature, without real self-dislike: this question I say may be asked, even upon supposition that the prospect of a future life were ever so uncertain.

The observation that man is thus by his very nature a law to himself, pursued to its just consequences, is of the utmost importance; because from it it will follow, that though men should, through stupidity or speculative scepticism, be ignorant of or disbelieve any authority in the universe to punish the violation of this law; yet, if there should be such authority, they would be as really liable to punishment, as though they had been before-hand convinced, that such punishment would follow. For in whatever sense we understand justice,

even supposing, what I think would be very presumptuous to assert, that the end of Divine punishment is no other than that of civil punishment, namely, to prevent future mischief: upon this bold supposition, ignorance, or disbelief of the sanction would by no means exempt even from this justice: because it is not foreknowledge of the punishment, which renders it obnoxious to it; but merely violating a known obligation.

And here it comes in one's way to take notice of a manifest error or mistake, in the author now cited, unless perhaps he has incautiously expressed himself so as to be misunderstood; namely, that it is malice only, and not goodness, which can make us afraid.[4] Whereas in reality, goodness is the natural and just object of the greatest fear to an ill man. Malice may be appeased or satiated: humour may change: but goodness is a fixed, steady, immovable principle of action. If either of the former holds the sword of justice, there is plainly ground for the greatest of crimes to hope for impunity, but if it be goodness, there can be no possible hope, whilst the reasons of things, or the ends of government, call for punishment. Thus every one sees how much greater chance of impunity an ill man has in a partial administration, than in a just and upright one. It is said that the interest or good of the whole, must be the interest of the universal being, and that he can have no other. Be it so. This author has proved that vice is naturally the misery of mankind in this world. Consequently it was for the good of the whole, that it should be so. What shadow of reason then is there to assert, that this may not be the case hereafter? Danger of future punishment (and if there be danger, there is ground of fear) no more supposes malice, than the present feeling of punishment does.

[vii. x.] The sermon upon the character of Balaam, and that upon self-deceit both relate to one subject. I am persuaded, that a very great part of the wickedness of the world is, in one way or other, owing to the self-partiality, self-flattery, and self-deceit endeavoured there to be laid open and explained. It is to be observed amongst persons of the lowest rank, in proportion to their compass of thought, as much as

[4] Characteristics, vol. I., p. 39.

amongst men of education and improvement. It seems, that people are capable of being thus artful with themselves, in proportion as they are capable of being so with others. Those who have taken notice that there is really such a thing, namely, plain falseness and insincerity in men with regard to themselves, will readily see the drift and design of these discourses: and nothing, that I can add, will explain the design of them to him, who has not before-hand remarked, at least, somewhat of the character. And yet, the admonitions they contain, may be as much wanted by such a person, as by others; for it is to be noted, that a man may be entirely possessed by this unfairness of mind, without having the least speculative notion what the thing is.

[viii.] The account given of resentment in the eighth sermon, is introductory to the following one upon forgiveness of injuries. It may possibly have appeared to some, at first sight, a strange assertion, that injury is the only natural object of settled resentment, or that men do not in fact resent deliberately anything but under this appearance of injury. But I must desire the reader not to take any assertion alone by itself, but to consider the whole of what is said upon it: because this is necessary, not only in order to judge of the truth of it, but often, such is the nature of language, to see the very meaning of the assertion. Particularly as to this, injury and injustice is, in the sermon itself, explained to mean, not only the more gross and shocking instances of wickedness, but also contempt, scorn, neglect, any sort of disagreeable behaviour towards a person, which he thinks other than what is due to him. And the general notion of injury or wrong, plainly comprehends this, though the words are mostly confined to the higher degrees of it.

[ix.] Forgiveness of injuries is one of the very few moral obligations which has been disputed. But the proof that it is really an obligation, what our nature and condition require, seems very obvious, were it only from the consideration that revenge is doing harm merely for harm's sake. And as to the love of our enemies: resentment cannot supersede the obligation to universal benevolence, unless they are in the nature of the thing inconsistent, which they plainly are not.

[5] Sermon ix., p. 449

This Divine precept, to forgive injuries and love our enemies, though to be met with in Gentile moralists, yet is in a peculiar sense a precept of Christianity; as our Saviour has insisted more upon it, than upon any other single virtue. One reason of this doubtless is, that it so peculiarly becomes an imperfect, faulty creature. But it may be observed also, that a virtuous temper of mind, consciousness of innocence and good meaning towards every body, and a strong feeling of injustice and injury, may itself, such is the imperfection of our virtue, lead a person to violate this obligation, if he be not upon his guard. And it may well be supposed, that this is another reason why it is so much insisted upon by Him, who knew what was in man.

[xi. xii.] The chief design of the eleventh discourse is to state the notion of self-love and disinterestedness, in order to show that benevolence is not more unfriendly to self-love, than any other particular affection whatever. There is a strange affection in many people of explaining away all particular affections, and representing the whole of life as nothing but one continued exercise of self-love. Hence arises that surprising confusion and perplexity in the Epicureans* of old, Hobbes, the author of "Reflections, Sentences, et Maximes Morales," and this whole set of writers; the confusion of calling actions interested which are done in contradiction to the most manifest known interest, merely for the gratification of a present passion. Now all this confusion might easily be avoided, by stating to ourselves wherein the idea of self-love in general consists, as distinguished from all particular movements towards particular external objects; the appetites

* One need only look into Torquatus's account of the Epicurean system, in Cicero's first book De Finibus, to see, in what a surprising manner this was done by them. Thus the desire of praise, and of being beloved, he explains to be no other than desire of safety: regard to our country, even in the most virtuous character, to be nothing but regard to ourselves. The author of "Reflections, etc. Morales," says, curiosity proceeds from interest or pride; which pride also would doubtless have been explained to be self-love. Page 85. Ed. 1725. As if there were no such passions in mankind, as desire of esteem, or of being beloved, or of knowledge. Hobbes' account of the affections of good-will and pity, are instances of the same kind.

of sense, resentment, compassion, curiosity, ambition, and the rest.[7] When this is done, if the words selfish and interested cannot be parted with, but must be applied to everything; yet, to avoid such total confusion of all language, let the distinction be made by epithets: and the first may be called cool or settled selfishness, and the other passionate or sensual selfishness. But the most natural way of speaking plainly is, to call the first only, self-love, and the actions proceeding from it, interested: and to say of the latter, that they are not love to ourselves, but movements towards somewhat external: honour, power, the harm or good of another: and that the pursuit of these external objects, so far as it proceeds from these movements (for it may proceed from self-love[8]) is no otherwise interested, than as every action of every creature must, from the nature of the thing, be; for no one can act but from a desire, or choice, or preference of his own.

Self-love and any particular passion may be joined together: and from this complication, it becomes impossible in numberless instances to determine precisely, how far an action, perhaps even of one's own, has for its principle general self-love, or some particular passion. But this need create no confusion in the ideas themselves of self-love and particular passions. We distinctly discern what one is, and what the other are: though we may be uncertain how far one or the other influences us. And though from this uncertainty, it cannot but be, that there will be different opinions concerning mankind, as more or less governed by interest; and some will ascribe actions to self-love, which others will ascribe to particular passions: yet it is absurd to say that mankind are wholly actuated by either; since it is manifest that both have their influence. For as on the one hand, men form a general notion of interest, some placing it in one thing, and some in another, and have a considerable regard to it throughout the course of their life, which is owing to self-love; so on the other hand, they are often set on work by the particular passions themselves, and a considerable part of life is spent in the actual gratification of them, *i. e.* is employed, not by self-love, but by the passions.

[7] P. 469, etc. [8] See the note, p. 360.

Besides, the very idea of an interested pursuit, necessarily presupposes particular passions or appetites; since the very idea of interest or happiness consists in this, that an appetite or affection enjoys its object. It is not because we love ourselves that we find delight in such and such objects, but because we have particular affections towards them. Take away these affections, and you leave self-love absolutely nothing at all to employ itself about;[9] no end or object for it to pursue, excepting only that of avoiding pain. Indeed the Epicureans, who maintained that absence of pain was the highest happiness, might, consistently with themselves, deny all affection, and, if they had so pleased, every sensual appetite too: but the very idea of interest or happiness other than absence of pain implies particular appetites or passions; these being necessary to constitute that interest or happiness.

The observation that benevolence is no more disinterested than any of the common particular passions,[10] seems in itself worth being taken notice of: but is insisted upon to obviate that scorn, which one sees rising upon the faces of people who are said to know the world, when mention is made of a disinterested, generous or public-spirited action. The truth of that observation might be made appear, in a more formal manner of proof: for whoever will consider all the possible respects and relations which any particular affection can have to self-love and private interest, will, I think, see demonstrably, that benevolence is not in any respect more at variance with self-love, than any other particular affection whatever, but that it is in every respect, at least, as friendly to it.

If the observation be true, it follows, that self-love and benevolence, virtue and interest, are not to be opposed, but only to be distinguished from each other; in the same way as virtue and any other particular affection, love of arts, suppose, are to be distinguished. Every thing is what it is, and not another thing. The goodness or badness of actions does not arise from hence, that the epithet, interested or disinterested, may be applied to them, any more than that any other indifferent epithet, suppose inquisitive or jealous, may or may not

[9] P. 471 [10] P. 473, etc.

be applied to them; not from their being attended with present or future pleasure or pain: but from their being what they are: namely, what becomes such creatures as we are, what the state of the case requires, or the contrary. Or in other words, we may judge and determine, that an action is morally good or evil, before we so much as consider, whether it be interested or disinterested. This consideration no more comes in to determine, whether an action be virtuous, than to determine whether it be resentful. Self-love in its due degree is as just and morally good, as any affection whatever. Benevolence towards particular persons may be to a degree of weakness, and so be blamable: and disinterestedness is so far from being in itself commendable, that the utmost possible depravity, which we can in imagination conceive, is that of disinterested cruelty.

Neither does there appear any reason to wish self-love were weaker in the generality of the world, than it is. The influence which it has, seems plainly owing to its being constant and habitual, which it cannot but be, and not to the degree or strength of it. Every caprice of the imagination, every curiosity of the understanding, every affection of the heart, is perpetually showing its weakness, by prevailing over it. Men daily, hourly sacrifice the greatest known interest, to fancy, inquisitiveness, love or hatred, any vagrant inclination. The thing to be lamented is, not that men have so great regard to their own good or interest in the present world, for they have not enough;[11] but that they have so little to the good of others. And this seems plainly owing to their being so much engaged in the gratification of particular passions unfriendly to benevolence, and which happen to be most prevalent in them, much more than to self-love. As a proof of this may be observed, that there is no character more void of friendship, gratitude, natural affection, love to their country, common justice, or more equally and uniformly hard-hearted, than the abandoned in what is called the way of pleasure—hard-hearted and totally without feeling in behalf of others; except when they cannot escape the sight of distress, and so are interrupted by it in their pleasures. And yet it is ridiculous to call such an abandoned

[11] P. 369, etc.

course of pleasure interested, when the person engaged in it knows beforehand, and goes on under the feeling and apprehension that it will be as ruinous to himself as to those who depend upon him.

Upon the whole, if the generality of mankind were to cultivate within themselves the principle of self-love; if they were to accustom themselves often to sit down and consider what was the greatest happiness they were capable of attaining for themselves in this life, and if self-love were so strong and prevalent as that they would uniformly pursue this their supposed chief temporal good without being diverted from it by any particular passion, it would manifestly prevent numberless follies and vices. This was, in a great measure, the Epicurean system of philosophy. It is indeed by no means the religious, or even moral institution of life. Yet, with all the mistakes men would fall into about interest, it would be less mischievous than the extravagances of mere appetite, will and pleasure: for certainly self-love, though confined to the interest of this life, is of the two a much better guide than passion,[12] which has absolutely no bound nor measure but what is set to it by this self-love, or moral considerations.

From the distinction above made between self-love, and the several particular principles or affections in our nature, we may see how good ground there was for that assertion maintained by the several ancient schools of philosophy against the Epicureans, namely, that virtue is to be pursued as an end, eligible in and for itself. For, if there be any principles or affections in the mind of man distinct from self-love, that the things those principles tend towards, or the objects of those affections are, each of them in themselves eligible to be pursued upon its own account, and to be rested in as an end, is implied in the very idea of such principle or affection.[13] They, indeed, asserted much higher things of virtue, and with very good reason; but to say thus much of it, that it is to be pursued for itself, is to say no more of it than may truly be said of the object of every natural affection whatever.

[xiii. xiv.] The question which was a few years ago disputed

[12] P. 389. [13] P. 500.

in France concerning the love of God, which was there called enthusiasm, as it will everywhere by the generality of the world; this question, I say, answers in religion to that old one in morals now mentioned. And both of them are, I think, fully determined by the same observation, namely, that the very nature of affection, the idea itself, necessarily implies resting in its object as an end.

I shall not here add anything further to what I have said in the two discourses upon that most important subject, but only this: that if we are constituted such sort of creatures, as from our very nature, to feel certain affections or movements of mind upon the sight or contemplation of the meanest inanimate part of the creation, for the flowers of the field have their beauty, certainly there must be somewhat due to Him himself, who is the Author and Cause of all things, who is more intimately present to us than anything else can be, and with whom we have a nearer and more constant intercourse than we can have with any creature. There must be some movements of mind and heart which correspond to his perfections, or of which those perfections are the natural object. And that when we are commanded to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our soul; somewhat more must be meant than merely that we live in hope of rewards, or fear of punishments from Him; somewhat more than this must be intended: though these regards themselves are most just and reasonable, and absolutely necessary to be often recollected in such a world as this.

It may be proper just to advertise the reader, that he is not to look for any particular reason for the choice of the greatest part of these discourses; their being taken from amongst many others, preached in the same place, through a course of eight years, being in great measure accidental. Neither is he to expect to find any other connexion between them, than that uniformity of thought and design which will always be found in the writings of the same person when he writes with simplicity and in earnest.

Stanhope, September 16, 1729.

SERMON I.

UPON HUMAN NATURE.

[THERE are two ways of treating morals. One begins from the abstract relation of things, as in the systems of Cudworth and Clarke; the other begins with the nature of man. In these discourses the latter order is adopted, and the author intends to show in what sense virtue consists in following man's nature, and vice in deviating from it.

Man's nature, it must be carefully marked, includes two distinct things: the parts or elements of which it is composed, and the relation or connexion of those parts. The *first* sermon is devoted to the consideration of the "distinct parts of our internal frame." It is there shown that these parts are distinct; and not resolvable, as some have supposed, into one or more elements, as benevolence or self-love. The parts are also enumerated and classified. The *second* and *third* sermons discuss the relation between the several elements of our nature, proving the superiority, as a principle of action, of self-love over passion, and of conscience over both. From man's nature or constitution, as thus explained, it is shown that virtue is following nature; *i. e.*, it is obedience to the principles of action of which that nature is composed in due subjection to the laws which subsist among them.[1]

Sermon i. Human Nature—in its principles, private and social.
ii. Human Nature—in its constitution; or these principles in relation to each other: the supremacy of conscience.
iii. Human Nature, as thus explained, in relation to virtue.

[1] [This view of the connexion of the three sermons is important, and is taken partly from Butler's own preface, p. 340, which should be carefully read—and partly from the close of the third sermon. For a brief view of some doctrines which Butler quietly refutes, see Introductory Note to the "Dissertation on Virtue." "In these sermons," says Mackintosh, "Butler has taught truths more capable of being exactly distinguished from the doctrines of his predecessors, more satisfactorily established, more comprehensively applied to particulars, more rationally connected with each other, and, therefore, more worthy of the name of discovery, than any with which we are acquainted."]

A Original reference of the text: each member of the body of Christ connected with the rest for the good of the whole.

B Applying this principle, there are tendencies in man to his own good, and tendencies to the good of society: distinct in themselves, though coincident in their results.

1 There is in man a natural principle of benevolence, which is to society what self-love is to the individual.

a Proofs: friendship, compassion, parental love.

b These coincide in their results, and each requires the exercise of the other, a fresh proof that we are made for both.

(Note on Hobbes' account of benevolence, that (1) It is love of power. (2) Origin of this theory, and unsatisfactoriness of it. (3) Cases in which benevolence cannot be love of power. (4) If true, cruelty, when displaying more power than kindness, is more benevolent. (5) A question of fact, and proved by facts. (6) Whence it appears that benevolence is as independent a thing as resentment, though needing cultivation.)

2 There are in man other affections contributing to public and private good.

a They may be classified thus: Passions distinct from benevolence tending to public good; passions distinct from self-love tending to private good.

(Note, on the distinction between self-love and other affections. They differ in themselves, though sometimes using the same means of gratification.

1 Difference where the same means are used; hunger, shame.

2 Difference where the same means are not used.

Note on this classification.

Hunger and desire of esteem: the former not self-love; the latter not benevolence.)

b Social affections have respect to others, though tending also to individual good.

c. The public good is not necessarily contemplated in each act by men themselves.

d Conclusion.

3 There is in man a conscience or reflex sense, whereby we survey ourselves and pass sentence on our acts.

a Its tendency to the good of society.

b Shown to differ from affection.

c Proved to exist.

d Not intended to compare its relation to public and private good, but to note that it tends to both, especially the former.

Conclusion from these three-fold facts: men are made for society, as well as for themselves, whence may be drawn a new picture of human nature and of the relations of men. Nationalities, etc., spring from their nature more than from other causes.

Obj. There are in man tendencies mischievous to society: answer.

a So are there tendencies mischievous to himself; so that if the good of others is not part of our nature, neither is self-love.

b But these are good tendencies abused.

Note on envy and emulation. They differ not in their *end*, which is equality and superiority, but in their *means*. The end good; the means, in the case of envy, bad.

c There are exceptions to the rule in both cases.

Some have no affection for others; some, none for themselves. Ex.

Summary. Men are led by their nature to seek the happiness of themselves and also of others, though it must be noted (a) that men fulfil those duties imperfectly, and (b) often violate their nature in both respects.]

ROMANS xii. 4, 5.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

THE epistles in the New Testament have all of them a particular reference to the condition and usages of the Christian world at the time they were written. Therefore, as they cannot be thoroughly understood, unless that condition and those usages are known and attended to; so further, though they be known, yet if they be discontinued or changed, exhortations, precepts, and illustrations of things, which refer to such circumstances now ceased or altered, cannot at this time be urged in that manner, and with that force which they were to the primitive Christians. Thus the text now before us, in its first intent and design, relates to the decent management of those extraordinary gifts which were then in the church,[a] but which are now totally ceased. And even as to the allusion that we are one body in Christ, though what the apostle here intends is equally true of Christians in all circumstances, and the consideration of it is plainly still an additional motive, over and above moral considera-

[a] 1 Cor. xii.

tions, to the discharge of the several duties and offices of a Christian; yet it is manifest this allusion must have appeared with much greater force to those, who by the many difficulties they went through for the sake of their religion, were led to keep always in view the relation they stood in to their Saviour, who had undergone the same; to those who from the idolatries of all around them, and their ill treatment, were taught to consider themselves as not of the world in which they lived, but as a distinct society of themselves, with laws, and ends, and principles of life and action, quite contrary to those which the world professed themselves at that time influenced by. Hence the relation of a Christian was by them considered as nearer than that of affinity and blood, and they almost literally esteemed themselves as members one of another.

It cannot, indeed, possibly be denied, that our being God's creatures, and virtue being the natural law we are born under, and the whole constitution of man being plainly adapted to it, are prior obligations to piety and virtue, than the consideration that God sent his Son into the world to save it, and the motives which arise from the peculiar relation of Christians, as members one of another under Christ our head. However, though all this be allowed, as it expressly is by the inspired writers, yet it is manifest that Christians at the time of the Revelation, and immediately after,[a] could not but insist mostly upon considerations of this latter kind.

[a] [The remark of Butler—that the first Christians did insist more on our relation to Christ as a motive to holiness, than upon our natural relation to God, or upon our moral nature generally—is quite just. But the reasons which Butler suggests—that they did so, because Christ had recently appeared—is without foundation. The true reason is that redemption, and the facts connected with it, establish *for all time* a ground of moral obligation firmer than any other. The new relations thus disclosed give an impulse to our feelings, of which natural religion must from necessity be destitute. And these relations with the influence of them are as impressive now as they were in the first ages of the church. The cross is still "the *power* of God" to all who believe, and under its influence men still judge that they are to live not to themselves, but "to him that died for them and rose again."]

These observations show the original particular reference of the text, and the peculiar force with which the thing intended by the allusion in it must have been felt by the primitive Christian world. They likewise afford a reason for treating it at this time in a more general way.

The relation which the several parts or members of the natural body have to each other and to the whole body, is here compared to the relation which each particular person in society has to other particular persons and to the whole society: and the latter is intended to be illustrated by the former. And if there be a likeness between these two relations, the consequence is obvious: that the latter shows us we were intended to do good to others, as the former shows us that the several members of the natural body were intended to be instruments of good to each other and to the whole body. But as there is scarce any ground for a comparison between society and the mere material body, this without the mind being a dead unactive thing; much less can the comparison be carried to any length. And since the apostle speaks of the several members as having distinct offices which implies the mind, it cannot be thought an unallowable liberty, instead of the body and its members, to substitute the whole nature of man, and all the variety of internal principles which belong to it. And then the comparison will be between the nature of man as respecting self, and tending to private good, his own preservation and happiness; and the nature of man as having respect to society, and tending to promote public good, the happiness of that society. These ends do, indeed, perfectly coincide; and to aim at public and private good are so far from being inconsistent, that they mutually promote each other: yet in the following discourse they must be considered as entirely distinct, otherwise the nature of man as tending to one, or as tending to the other, cannot be compared. There can no comparison be made, without considering the things compared as distinct and different.

From this review and comparison of the nature of man as respecting self, and as respecting society, it will plainly appear, that there are as real and the same kind of indications in human nature, that we were made for society and to do good to our fellow-creatures, as that we were intended

to take care of our own life, and health, and private good; and that the same objections lie against one of these assertions as against the other. For

1 First, There is a natural principle of benevolence* in man, which is in some degree to society what self-love is to the

* Suppose a man of learning to be writing a grave book upon human nature, and to show in several parts of it that he had an insight into the subject he was considering; amongst other things, the following one would require to be accounted for; the appearance of benevolence or good will in men towards each other in the
1 instances of natural relation, and in others. Cautious of being deceived with outward show, he retires within himself to see exactly what that is in the mind of man from whence this appearance proceeds; and upon deep reflection, asserts the principle in the mind to be only the love of power, and delight in the exercise of it. Would not every body think here was a mistake of one word for another? That the philosopher was contemplating and accounting for some other human actions, some other behaviour of man to man? and could any one be thoroughly satisfied, that what is commonly called benevolence or good-will was really the affection meant,
2 but only by being made to understand that this learned person had a general hypothesis, to which the appearance of good-will could no otherwise be reconciled? that what has this appearance is often nothing but ambition; that delight in superiority often (suppose always) mixes itself with benevolence, only makes it more specious to call it ambition than hunger, of the two: but in reality that passion does no more account for the whole appearances of good-will, than this appetite does. Is there not often the appearance of
3 one man's wishing that good to another, which he knows himself unable to procure him; and rejoicing in it, though bestowed by a third person? And can love of power any way possibly come in to account for this desire or delight? Is there not often the appearance of men's distinguishing between two or more persons, preferring one before another to do good to, in cases where love of power cannot in the least account for the distinction and preference? For this principle can no otherwise distinguish between objects, than as it is a greater instance and exertion of power to do good to one rather
4 than to another. Again, suppose goodwill in the mind of man to be nothing but delight in the exercise of power: men might indeed be restrained by distant and accidental considerations; but these restraints being removed, they would have a disposition to, and delight in mischief as an exercise and proof of power: and this disposition and delight would arise from or be the same principle in the mind,

And if there be in mankind any disposition to if there be any such thing as compassion, for is momentary love; if there be any such thing nal or filial affections; if there be any affection ature, the object and end of which is the good of is is itself benevolence, or the love of another. so short, be it ever so low a degree, or ever so onfined, it proves the assertion, and points out re designed for, as really as though it were in a ce and more extensive. I must, however, remind

n to and delight in charity. Thus cruelty, as distinct d resentment, would be exactly the same in the mind od-will: that one tends to the happiness, the other to our fellow-creatures, is, it seems, merely an accidental which the mind has not the least regard to. These dities which even men of capacity run into, when they to belie their nature, and will perversely disclaim that which was originally stamped upon it; the traces of er faint, are plainly discernible upon the mind of man. uman Nature, c. 9. § 17.

ou can in earnest doubt, whether there be such a thing n one man towards another; (for the question is not ther the degree or extensiveness of it, but concerning itself;) let it be observed, that whether man be thus, onstituted, what is the inward frame in this particular stion of fact or natural history, not provable imme- ason. It is therefore to be judged of and determined, way other facts or matters of natural history are; to the external senses, or inward perceptions, respec- matter under consideration is cognizable by one or y arguing from acknowledged facts and actions; for a of actions of the same kind, in different circumstances, g different objects, will prove to a certainty, what y do not, and, to the greatest probability, what prin- proceed from: and lastly, by the testimony of man- hat there is some degree of benevolence amongst men, ongly and plainly proved in all these ways, as it could oved, supposing there was this affection in our nature. ny one think fit to assert, that resentment in the mind solutely nothing but reasonable concern for our own lsity of this, and what is the real nature of that pas- shown in no other ways than those in which it may

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you, that though benevolence and self-love are different; though the former tends most directly to public good, and the latter to private: yet they are so perfectly coincident, that the greatest satisfaction to ourselves depends upon our having benevolence in a due degree; and that self-love is one chief security of our right behaviour towards society. It may be added, that their mutual coinciding, so that we can scarce promote one without the other, is equally a proof that we were made for both.

2 Secondly, This will further appear from observing that the several passions and affections, which are distinct[5] both

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be shown, that there is such a thing in some degree as real good-will in man towards man. It is sufficient that the seeds of it be implanted in our nature by God. There is, it is owned, much left for us to do upon our own heart and temper; to cultivate, to improve, to call it forth, to exercise it in a steady, uniform manner. This is our work: this is virtue and religion.

[5] Every body makes a distinction between self-love, and the several particular passions, appetites, and affections; and yet they are often confounded again. That they are totally different will be seen by any one who will distinguish between the passions and appetites themselves, and endeavouring after the means of their gratification. Consider the appetite of hunger, and the desire of esteem: these being the occasion both of pleasure and pain, the coolest self-love, as well as the appetites and passions themselves, may put us upon making use of the proper method of obtaining that pleasure, and avoiding that pain; but the feelings themselves, the pain of hunger and shame, and the delight from esteem, are no more self-love, than they are anything in the world. Though a man hated himself, he would as much feel the pain of hunger as he would that of the gout; and it is plainly supposable there may be creatures with self-love in them to the highest degree, who may be quite insensible and indifferent (as men in some cases are) to the contempt and esteem of those, upon whom their happiness does not in some further respects depend. And as self-love and the several particular passions and appetites are in themselves totally different; so, that some actions proceed from one, and some from the other, will be manifest to any who will observe the two following very supposable cases. One man rushes upon certain ruin for the gratification of a present desire: nobody will call the principle of this action self-love. Suppose another man to go through some laborious work upon promise of a great reward, without any distinct knowledge

from benevolence and self-love, do in general contribute and lead us to public good, as really as to private. It might be thought too minute and particular, and would carry us too great a length, to distinguish between and compare together the several passions or appetites distinct from benevolence, whose primary use and intention is the security and good of society; and the passions distinct from self-love, whose primary intention and design is the security and good of the individual.[6] It is enough to the present argument, that

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what the reward will be : this course of action cannot be ascribed to any particular passion. The former of these actions is plainly to be imputed to some particular passion or affection, the latter as plainly to the general affection or principle of self-love. That there are some particular pursuits or actions concerning which we cannot determine how far they are owing to one, and how far to the other, proceeds from this, that the two principles are frequently mixed together, and run up into each other. This distinction is further explained in the eleventh sermon.

[6] If any desire to see this distinction and comparison made in a particular instance, the appetite and passion now mentioned may serve for one. Hunger is to be considered as a private appetite; because the end for which it was given us is the preservation of the individual. Desire of esteem is a public passion; because the end for which it was given us is to regulate our behaviour towards society. The respect which this has to private good is as remote as the respect that has to public good : and the appetite is no more self-love, than the passion is benevolence. The object and end of the former is merely food; the object and end of the latter is merely esteem: but the latter can no more be gratified, without contributing to the good of society, than the former can be gratified without contributing to the preservation of the individual. [The passions to which Butler here alludes, have been classified thus :—1. Appetites or bodily desires, originating in our wants, natural or artificial, and having for their object, *things*. 2. Affection—as love, hatred, benevolence, etc., terms loosely applied to things, but properly applicable to *persons*. 3. Mental desires—love of knowledge, of safety, etc., having for their object *abstractions*. 4. Moral sentiments—indignation, approval, resentment, having for their object, *actions* regarded in their *moral qualities*. 5. Reflex sentiments—the desire of esteem, of our own approval (the idea included in conscience), etc. These sentiments have for their objects the *thoughts* of others, or our own in relation to *ourselves*: 'Whewell's Elements

b desire of esteem from others, contempt and esteem of them, love of society as distinct from affection to the good of it, indignation against successful vice, that these are public affections or passions; have an immediate respect to others, naturally lead us to regulate our behaviour in such a manner as will be of service to our fellow-creatures. If any or all of these may be considered likewise as private affections, as tending to private good; this does not hinder them from being public affections too, or destroy the good influence of them upon society, and their tendency to public good. It
c may be added, that as persons without any conviction from reason of the desirableness of life, would yet of course preserve it merely from the appetite of hunger; so by acting merely from regard (suppose) to reputation, without any consideration of the good of others, men often contribute to public good. In both these instances they are plainly instruments in the hands of another, in the hands of Providence, to carry on ends, the preservation of the individual and good of society, which they themselves have not in their view or
a intention. The sum is, men have various appetites, passions, and particular affections, quite distinct both from self-love and from benevolence: all of these have a tendency to promote both public and private good, and may be considered as respecting others and ourselves equally and in common; but some of them seem most immediately to respect others, or tend to public good; others of them most immediately to respect self, or tend to private good. As the former are not benevolence, so the latter are not self-love: neither sort are instances of our love either to ourselves or others; but only instances of our Maker's care and love both of the individual and the species, and proofs that he intended we should be

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of Morality,' chap. ii. The classification of Stewart gives greater prominence to self-love, and to other parts of our nature (as sympathy), which co-operate with the moral sense in influencing the conduct: 'Outlines,' p. 80–162. Of late, self-love has been regarded as a principle of secondary formation, the result of reason or habit, controlling the gratification of particular desires: 'Mackintosh,' p. 196; 'Wayland,' p. 106. Butler, wisely for his purpose, avoids these questions. The reality of the distinction between different principles of action is all that is needed for his argument.]

instruments of good to each other, as well as that we should
be so to ourselves.

Thirdly, There is a principle of reflection in men, by which 3
they distinguish between, approve and disapprove their own
actions. We are plainly constituted such sort of creatures
as to reflect upon our own nature. The mind can take a
view of what passes within itself, its propensions, aversions,
passions, affections, as respecting such objects, and in such
degrees; and of the several actions consequent thereupon.
In this survey it approves of one, disapproves of another,
and towards a third is affected in neither of these ways, but
is quite indifferent. This principle in man, by which he ap-
proves or disapproves his heart, temper, and actions, is con-
science; for this is the strict sense of the word, though
sometimes it is used so as to take in more. And that this
faculty tends to restrain men from doing mischief to each a
other, and leads them to do good, is too manifest to need
being insisted upon. Thus a parent has the affection of love
to his children: this leads him to take care of, to educate,
to make due provision for them; the natural affection leads
to this: but the reflection that it is his proper business,
what belongs to him, that it is right and commendable so to
do; this added to the affection, becomes a much more settled
principle, and carries him on through more labour and diffi-
culties for the sake of his children, than he would undergo
from that affection alone; if he thought it, and the course
of action it led to, either indifferent or criminal. This, indeed, b
is impossible, to do that which is good and not to approve
of it; for which reason they are frequently not considered
as distinct, though they really are: for men often approve
of the actions of others, which they will not imitate, and
likewise do that which they approve not. It cannot possibly c
be denied that there is this principle of reflection or con-
science in human nature. Suppose a man to relieve an
innocent person in great distress; suppose the same man
afterwards, in the fury of anger, to do the greatest mischief
to a person who had given no just cause of offence; to aggra-
vate the injury, add the circumstances of former friendship
and obligation from the injured person; let the man who is
supposed to have done these two different actions, coolly
reflect upon them afterwards, without regard to their con-

sequences to himself: to assert that any common man would be affected in the same way towards these different actions, that he would make no distinction between them, but approve or disapprove them equally, is too glaring a falsity to need being confuted. There is, therefore, this principle of reflection or conscience in mankind. It is needless to compare the respect it has to private good, with the respect it has to public; since it plainly tends as much to the latter as to the former, and is commonly thought to tend chiefly to the latter. This faculty is now mentioned merely as another part in the inward frame of man, pointing out to us in some degree what we are intended for, and as what will naturally and of course have some influence. The particular place assigned to it by Nature, what authority it has, and how great influence it ought to have, shall be hereafter considered.

From this comparison of benevolence and self-love, of our public and private affections, of the courses of life they lead to, and of the principle of reflection or conscience as respecting each of them, it is as manifest that we were made for society, and to promote the happiness of it; as that we were intended to take care of our own life, and health, and private good.[7]

[7] [Butler labours to establish the fact that there are different principles in human nature, and that these principles are not all selfish, any more than all benevolent, in order to meet two classes of opponents, as well as to establish his own argument. The Epicureans held, with some moderns, that all the motive powers of man's nature are resolvable into selfishness in its grosser or more refined forms. Other sects, again, hold that they are resolvable into some other *single* principle; sympathy, or association, or benevolence. The first of these theories is the most degrading; but all are liable to the same objection. They are, in fact, not true; and they oppose, with equal force, the fundamental principle of Butler's system. The summary of Mackintosh is instructive. "Mankind have various principles of action: some leading to the good of the individual, some to the good of the community. But the former are not instances of self-love; for self-love has the desire of a man's own happiness as its object, whereas the object of an appetite or passion is some outward thing. Self-love seeks things as means of happiness; the private appetites seek things, not as means, but as ends. . . . . The satisfaction of these appetites

And from this whole review must be given a different draught of human nature from what we are often presented with. Mankind are by nature so closely united, there is such a correspondence between the inward sensations of one man and those of another, that disgrace is as much avoided as bodily pain, and to be the object of esteem and love as much desired as any external goods: and in many particular cases, persons are carried on to do good to others, as the end their affection tends to and rests in; and manifest that they find real satisfaction and enjoyment in this course of behaviour. There is such a natural principle of attraction in man towards man, that having trod the same tract of land, having breathed in the same climate, barely having been born in the same artificial district or division, becomes the occasion of contracting acquaintances and familiarities many years after: for anything may serve the purpose. Thus relations merely nominal are sought and invented, not by governors, but by the lowest of the people, which are found sufficient to hold mankind together in little fraternities and copartnerships: weak ties, indeed, and what may afford fund enough for ridicule, if they are absurdly considered as the real principles of that union; but they are in truth merely the occasions, as anything may be of anything, upon which our nature carries us on according to its own previous bent and bias, which occasions, therefore, would be nothing at all, were there not this prior disposition and bias of nature. Men are so much one body, that in a peculiar manner they feel for each other, shame, sudden danger, resentment, honour, prosperity, distress; one or another, or

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and passions in the man, compose what is called a man's interest. . . . . But besides private or public desires, and besides the calm regard to our own general welfare, there is a principle in man in its nature supreme over all others. . . . His self-love is superior to his private passions, and conscience is superior to the whole man. Passion implies nothing but inclination to follow an object, and in that respect, passions differ only in force. . . . . But no notion can be formed of conscience which does not comprehend direction and authority over all the other principles of our nature." See also 'Chalmers' Bridgewater Treatise,' p. 40.]

all of these, from the social nature in general, from benevolence, upon the occasion of natural relation, acquaintance, protection, dependence; each of these being distinct cements of society. And, therefore, to have no restraint from, no regard to others in our behaviour, is the speculative absurdity of considering ourselves as single and independent, as having nothing in our nature which has respect to our fellow-creatures, reduced to action and practice. And this is the same absurdity, as to suppose a hand, or any part to have no natural respect to any other, or to the whole body."

Obj. But allowing all this, it may be asked, "Has not man dispositions and principles within which lead him to do evil to others, as well as to do good? Whence come the many miseries else, which men are the authors and instruments of to each other?" These questions, so far as they relate to the foregoing discourse, may be answered by asking, Has not man also dispositions and principles within, which lead him to do evil to himself as well as good? Whence come the many miseries else, sickness, pain and death, which men are the instruments and authors of to themselves?

It may be thought more easy to answer one of these questions than the other, but the answer to both is really the same; that mankind have ungoverned passions which they will gratify at any rate, as well to the injury of others as in contradiction to known private interest: but that as there is no such thing as self-hatred, so neither is there any such thing as ill will in one man towards another, emulation and resentment being away; whereas there is plainly benevolence or good will. There is no such thing as love of injustice, oppression, treachery, ingratitude; but only eager desires after such and such external goods, which, according to a very ancient observation, the most abandoned would choose to obtain by innocent means, if they were as easy and as effectual to their end. That even emulation and resentment,

[These statements of Butler on sympathy, are guarded and just. Adam Smith further explained and applied this principle, and made it the foundation and substance of his system. What in Butler is the companion of benevolence, and our sense of morality, is, in Smith, the essence of nearly all emotion, and of conscience itself.—See his '*Theory of Moral Sentiments.*']

by any one who will consider what these passions really are in nature,[9] will be found nothing to the purpose of this objection: and that the principles and passions in the mind of man, which are distinct both from self-love and benevolence, primarily and most directly lead to right behaviour with regard to others as well as himself, and only secondarily and accidentally to what is evil. Thus, though men to avoid the shame of one villany are sometimes guilty of a greater, yet it is easy to see that the original tendency of shame is to prevent the doing of shameful actions; and its leading men to conceal such actions when done, is only in consequence of their being done, *i. e.*, of the passions not having answered its first end.

If it be said, that there are persons in the world, who are in great measure without the natural affections towards their fellow-creatures: there are likewise instances of persons without the common natural affections to themselves; but the nature of man is not to be judged of by either of these, but by what appears in the common world, in the bulk of mankind.

I am afraid it would be thought very strange, if to confirm the truth of this account of human nature, and make out the justness of the foregoing comparison, it should be added, that from what appears, men in fact as much and as often contradict that part of their nature which respects self, and which leads them to their own private good and happiness, as they contradict that part of it which respects society, and tends to public good. That there are as few persons who

[9] Emulation is merely the desire and hope of equality with or superiority over others, with whom we compare ourselves. There does not appear to be any other grief in the natural passion, but only that want which is implied in desire. However this may be so strong as to be the occasion of great grief. To desire the attainment of this equality or superiority by the particular means of others being brought down to our own level, or below it, is I think, the distinct notion of envy. From whence, it is easy to see, that the real end, which the natural passion, emulation, and which the unlawful one, envy, aims at, is exactly the same; namely, that equality or superiority: and consequently, that to do mischief is not the end of envy, but merely the means it makes use of to attain its end. As to resentment, see the eighth sermon.

attain the greatest satisfaction and enjoyment which they might attain in the present world, as who do the greatest good to others which they might do: nay, that there are as few who can be said really and in earnest to aim at one as at the other. Take a survey of mankind: the world in general, the good and bad, almost without exception, equally are agreed, that were religion out of the case, the happiness of the present life would consist in a manner wholly in riches, honours, sensual gratifications; insomuch that one scarce hears a reflection made upon prudence, life, conduct, but upon this supposition. Yet on the contrary, that persons in the greatest affluence of fortune are no happier than such as have only a competency; that the cares and disappointments of ambition for the most part far exceed the satisfactions of it; as also the miserable intervals of intemperance and excess, and the many untimely deaths occasioned by a dissolute course of life. These things are all seen, acknowledged, by every one acknowledged; but are thought no objections against, though they expressly contradict this universal principle, that the happiness of the present life consists in one or other of them. Whence is all this absurdity and contradiction? Is not the middle way obvious? Can anything be more manifest, than that the happiness of life consists in these possessed and enjoyed only to a certain degree; that to pursue them beyond this degree, is always attended with more inconvenience than advantage to a man's self, and often with extreme misery and unhappiness. Whence then, I say, is all this absurdity and contradiction? Is it really the result of consideration in mankind, how they may become most easy to themselves, most free from care, and enjoy the chief happiness attainable in this world? Or is it not manifestly owing either to this, that they have not cool and reasonable concern enough for themselves to consider wherein their chief happiness in the present life consists; or else, if they do consider it, that they will not act conformably to what is the result of that consideration, *i. e.*, reasonable concern for themselves, or cool self-love is prevailed over by passion and appetite. So that from what appears, there is no ground to assert that those principles in the nature of man, which most directly lead to promote the good of our fellow-creatures, are more generally or in a greater

degree violated, than those which most directly lead us to promote our own private good and happiness.

The sum of the whole is plainly this. The nature of man considered in his single capacity, and with respect only to the present world, is adapted and leads him to attain the greatest happiness he can for himself in the present world. The nature of man considered in his public or social capacity leads him to a right behaviour in society, to that course of life which we call virtue. Men follow or obey their nature in both these capacities and respects to a certain degree, but not entirely: their actions do not come up to the whole of what their nature leads them to in either of these capacities or respects: and they often violate their nature in both, *i. e.*, as they neglect the duties they owe to their fellow-creatures to which their nature leads them, and are injurious, to which their nature is abhorrent; so there is a manifest negligence in men of their real happiness or interest in the present world, when that interest is inconsistent with a present gratification, for the sake of which they negligently, nay, even knowingly, are the authors and instruments of their own misery and ruin. Thus they are as often unjust to themselves as to others, and for the most part are equally so to both by the same actions.

Summ

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b

SERMONS II., III.

UPON HUMAN NATURE.

1 [Morality, or the course God intends men to take, may be known from our nature.

a Moral obligation admits this kind of proof.

b Man's nature may be known, and so God's intention, though with some difficulty.

c Such reasoning is as just, as that from our physical constitution.

d The elements of our nature have been already ascertained, and so morality may be defined.

2 But herein, it is objected, there can be no law. 'Nature means passion, emotion, reflection, yet these differ in different men: it is their 'nature,' therefore, to follow the strongest. So that vice and morality, the violation of rules and the observance of them, are alike natural; answer,

Ancient writers and Scripture concur nevertheless in affirm-

ing a 'natural law,' and in describing vice as deviation from that law.

b Nature, moreover, has different meanings;

1 It means any principle in man, whatever its kind or degree, as anger, benevolence. This cannot be the meaning here, for in this sense anger is both 'natural' and unnatural.

2 It means any principle that is strongest: pride is the nature of a proud man. This meaning must be rejected: for in this sense, vice is often following nature.

3 It means a good law, not identical with feeling, though it is said to be written on the heart.

3 This law of nature is conscience, with the prerogative of supremacy over other principles.

a Some such supremacy shown from what is *unnatural*; following desires like brutes.

b Some such supremacy shown from what is natural, making passion subservient to self-love; whence one principle is clearly superior to another.

c Such supremacy part of the idea of conscience; not in fact, perhaps (power), but at least of right (authority):

d Hence it has not only some place in our nature, but the first; passion and interest may rebel; still *its* authority and rights are sacred.

e If this be questioned, suppose that conscience has no supremacy, then nothing done in accordance with natural feeling or passion is unnatural or wrong. Parricide and filial obedience, being both expressions of emotion, are equally approved.

4 The constitution of human nature, thus explained, gives rules of virtue, and creates an obligation to obey them.

a A constitution implies not only parts, but parts in their connexion and dependency.

b A constitution is violated, not only by removing parts but by giving to the lower the supremacy; hence the saying that injustice is contrary to nature.

(Note on the meaning of 'a constitution.'

1 Constitution defined, in relation to man especially.

2 Its nature illustrated.

3 Constitution conceived of as perfect when virtuous; though actually imperfect).

c Whence man, having in his make parts lower and supreme, is a law to himself.

d The law thus defined has the two most important qualities of law:

1 It is easily applied, and

2 It brings with it its own obligation.

5 Against this law it is objected—

a It teaches us to regard others, and places us under restraints: better be free, and seek only our own good. Answer—

1 You cannot disregard others and secure your own good.

2 Nor can you gain anything without restraints of some kind

b To which it is objected again—

Then we are it seems to seek happiness, and so far to regard others and practice restraints, as these restraints bring greater convenience: hence

We agree, and our own happiness is, after all, it seems, the measure and end of virtue.

Yes, only note,

1 That not vice, but virtue, secures happiness.

2 That vice, not virtue, has most restraints, especially when virtue becomes habitual.

However,

3 Duty and interest (*i. e.* happiness) really coincide; generally even here, and certainly in the end.

Conscience and enlightened self-love therefore lead the same way, though of the two the former is supreme.

Summary.

ROMANS ii. 14.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.

As speculative truth admits of different kinds of proof, so 1
likewise moral obligations may be shown by different methods. a
If the real nature of any creature leads him and is adapted to such and such purposes only, or more than to any other; this is a reason to believe the Author of that nature intended it for those purposes. Thus there is no doubt the eye was intended for us to see with. And the more complex any constitution is, and the greater variety of parts there are which thus tend to some one end, the stronger is the proof
that such end was designed. However, when the inward b
frame of man is considered as any guide in morals, the utmost caution must be used that none make peculiarities in their own temper, or anything which is the effect of particular customs, though observable in several, the standard of what is common to the species: and above all, that the

highest principle be not forgot or excluded, that to which belongs the adjustment and correction of all other inward movements and affections, which principle will, of course, have some influence, but which being in nature supreme, as shall now be shown, ought to preside over and govern all the rest. The difficulty of rightly observing the two former cautions; the appearance there is of some small diversity amongst mankind with respect to this faculty, with respect to their natural sense of moral good and evil; and the attention necessary to survey with any exactness what passes within, have occasioned that it is not so much agreed what is the standard of the internal nature of man, as of his external form. Neither is this last exactly settled. Yet we understand one another when we speak of the shape of a human body. So likewise we do when we speak of the heart and inward principles, how far soever the standard is from being exact or precisely fixed. There is, therefore, ground for an attempt of showing men to themselves, of showing them what course of life and behaviour their real nature points out and would lead them to. Now obligations of virtue shown, and motives to the practice of it enforced, from a review of the nature of man, are to be considered as an appeal to each particular person's heart and natural conscience; as the external senses are appealed to for the proof of things cognizable by them. Since then our inward feelings, and the perceptions we receive from our external senses are equally real; to argue from the former to life and conduct, is as little liable to exception, as to argue from the latter to absolute speculative truth. A man can as little doubt whether his eyes were given him to see with, as he can doubt of the truth of the science of optics deduced from ocular experiments. And allowing the inward feeling, shame; a man can as little doubt whether it was given him to prevent his doing shameful actions, as he can doubt whether his eyes were given him to guide his steps. And as to these inward feelings themselves, that they are real, that man has in his nature passions and affections, can no more be questioned, than that he has external senses. Neither can the former be wholly mistaken, though to a certain degree liable to greater mistakes than the latter.

There can be no doubt but that several propensions or

instincts, several principles in the heart of man, carry him to society, and to contribute to the happiness of it, in a sense and a manner in which no inward principle leads him to evil. These principles, propensions, or instincts, which lead him to do good, are approved of by a certain faculty within, quite distinct from these propensions themselves. All this hath been fully made out in the foregoing discourse.

But it may be said, "What is all this, though true, to the 2
purpose of virtue and religion? These require, not only that we do good to others when we are led this way, by benevolence or reflection, happening to be stronger than other principles, passions, or appetites; but likewise that the whole character be formed upon thought and reflection, that every action be directed by some determinate rule, some other rule than the strength and prevalency of any principle or passion. What sign is there in our nature (for the inquiry is only about what is to be collected from thence) that this was intended by its author? Or how does so various and fickle a temper as that of man appear adapted thereto? It may indeed be absurd and unnatural for men to act without any reflection; nay, without regard to that particular kind of reflection which you call conscience, because this does belong to our nature. For as there never was a man but who approved one place, prospect, building, before another; so it does not appear that there ever was a man who would not have approved an action of humanity rather than of cruelty, interest and passion being quite out of the case. But interest and passion do come in, and are often too strong for and prevail over reflection and conscience. Now as brutes have various instincts by which they are carried on to the end the Author of their nature intended them for, is not man in the same condition, with this difference only, that to his instincts (*i. e.*, appetites and passions) is added the principle of reflection or conscience? And as brutes act agreeably to their nature, in following that principle or particular instinct which for the present is strongest in them, does not man likewise act agreeably to his nature, or obey the law of his creation, by following that principle, be it passion or conscience, which for the present happens to be strongest in him? Thus different men are by their particular nature hurried on to pursue honour, or riches, or pleasure

There are also persons whose temper leads them in an uncommon degree to kindness, compassion, doing good to their fellow-creatures; as there are others who are given to suspend their judgment, to weigh and consider things, and to act upon thought and reflection. Let every one then quietly follow his nature, as passion, reflection, appetite, the several parts of it, happen to be strongest; but let not the man of virtue take upon him to blame the ambitious, the covetous, the dissolute, since these equally with him obey and follow their nature. Thus, as in some cases we follow our nature in doing the works contained in the law, so in other cases we follow nature in doing contrary."

Now all this licentious talk entirely goes upon a supposition, that men follow their nature in the same sense, in violating the known rules of justice and honesty for the sake of a present gratification, as they do in following those rules when they have no temptation to the contrary. And if this were true, that could not be so which St. Paul asserts, that men are by nature a law to themselves. If by following nature were meant only acting as we please, it would indeed be ridiculous to speak of nature as any guide in morals: nay, the very mention of deviating from nature would be absurd; and the mention of following it, when spoken by way of distinction, would absolutely have no meaning. For did ever any one act otherwise than as he pleased? And yet the ancients speak of deviating from Nature as vice; and of following nature so much as a distinction, that according to them the perfection of virtue consists therein. So that language itself should teach people another sense to the words following nature, than barely acting as we please. Let it however be observed, that though the words human nature are to be explained, yet the real question of this discourse is not concerning the meaning of words, any otherwise than as the explanation of them may be needful to make out and explain the assertion, that every man is naturally a law to himself, that every one may find within himself the rule of right, and obligations to follow it. This St. Paul affirms in the words of the text, and this the foregoing objection really denies by seeming to allow it. And the objections will be fully answered, and the text before us explained, by observing that nature is considered in different views, and the

word used in different senses; and by showing in what view it is considered, and in what sense the word is used, when intended to express and signify that which is the guide of life, that by which men are a law to themselves. I say, the b
explanation of the term will be sufficient, because from thence it will appear that, in some senses of the word, Nature cannot be, but that in another sense it manifestly is, a law to us.

I. By nature is often meant no more than some principle 1
in man, without regard either to the kind or degree of it. Thus the passion of anger, and the affection of parents to their children, would be called equally natural. And as the same person hath often contrary principles, which at the same time draw contrary ways, he may by the same action both follow and contradict his nature in this sense of the word; he may follow one passion and contradict another.

II. Nature is frequently spoken of as consisting in those 2
passions which are strongest, and most influence the actions; which being vicious ones, mankind is in this sense naturally vicious, or vicious by nature. Thus St. Paul says of the Gentiles, who were dead in trespasses and sins, and walked according to the spirit of disobedience, that they were by nature the children of wrath.[1] They could be no otherwise children of wrath by nature, than they were vicious by nature.

Here then are two different senses of the word nature, in neither of which men can at all be said to be a law to themselves. They are mentioned only to be excluded; to prevent their being confounded, as the latter is in the objection with another sense of it, which is now to be inquired after and explained.

III. The apostle asserts, that the Gentiles do by nature 3
the things contained in the law. Nature is indeed here put by way of distinction from revelation, but yet it is not a mere negative. He intends to express more than that by which they did not, that by which they did the works of the law, namely, by nature. It is plain the meaning of the word is not the same in this passage as in the former, where it is spoken of as evil; for in the latter it is spoken of as good, as

[1] Ephes. ii. 3.

that by which they acted, or might have acted virtuously What that is in man by which he is naturally a law to himself, is explained in the following words: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another. If there be a distinction to be made between the works written in their hearts and the witness of conscience, by the former must be meant the natural disposition to kindness and compassion, to do what is of good report, to which this apostle often refers. That part of the nature of man treated of in the foregoing discourse, which with very little reflection and of course leads him to society, and by means of which he naturally acts a just and good part in it, unless other passions or interest lead him astray. Yet since other passions, and regards to private interest, which lead us (though indirectly, yet they lead us) astray, are themselves in a degree equally natural, and often most prevalent; and since we have no method of seeing the particular degrees in which one or the other is placed in us by nature, it is plain the former, considered merely as natural, good and right, as they are, can no more be a law to us than the latter. But there is a
8 superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions; which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust. Which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly. And which, if not forcibly stopped, naturally and always of course goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own. But this part of the office of conscience is beyond my present design explicitly to consider. It is by this faculty, natural to man, that he is a moral agent, that he is a law to himself; but this faculty, I say, not to be considered merely as a principle in his heart, which is to have some influence as well as others; but considered as a faculty in kind and in nature supreme over all others, and which bears its own authority of being so.

This prerogative, this natural supremacy of the faculty which surveys, approves, or disapproves the several affections of our mind, and actions of our lives, being that by which men are a law to themselves, their conformity or dis obedience to which law of our nature renders their actions in the highest and most proper sense, natural or unnatural, it is fit it be further explained to you. And I hope it will be so, if you will attend to the following reflections:—

Man may act according to that principle or inclination which for the present happens to be strongest, and yet act in a way disproportionate to, and violate his real proper nature. Suppose a brute creature by any bait to be allured into a snare, by which he is destroyed. He plainly followed the bent of his nature, leading him to gratify his appetite. There is an entire correspondence between his whole nature and such an action. Such action, therefore, is natural. But suppose a man, foreseeing the same danger of certain ruin, should rush into it for the sake of a present gratification. He, in this instance, would follow his strongest desire, as did the brute creature; but there would be as manifest a disproportion between the nature of a man and such an action, as between the meanest work of art and the skill of the greatest master in that art, which disproportion arises, not from considering the action singly in itself, or in its consequences, but from comparison of it with the nature of the agent. And since such an action is utterly disproportionate to the nature of man, it is in the strictest and most proper sense unnatural; this word expressing that disproportion. Therefore, instead of the words disproportionate to his nature, the word unnatural may now be put; this being more familiar to us. But let it be observed, that it stands for the same thing precisely.

Now what is it which renders such a rash action unnatural? Is it that he went against the principle of reasonable and cool self-love, considered merely as a part of his nature? No, for if he had acted the contrary way, he would equally have gone against a principle or part of his nature, namely, passion or appetite. But to deny a present appetite, from foresight that the gratification of it would end in immediate ruin or extreme misery, is by no means an unnatural action; whereas to contradict or go against cool self-love for the

sake of such gratification, is so in the instance before us. Such an action then being unnatural, and its being so not arising from a man's going against a principle or desire barely, nor in going against that principle or desire which happens for the present to be strongest, it necessarily follows that there must be some other difference or distinction to be made between these two principles, passion and cool self-love, than what I have yet taken notice of. And this difference, not being a difference in strength or degree, I call a difference in nature and in kind. And since, in the instance still before us, if passion prevails over self-love, the consequent action is unnatural; but if self-love prevails over passion, the action is natural. It is manifest that self-love is in human nature a superior principle to passion. This may be contradicted without violating that nature; but the former cannot. So that, if we will act conformably to the economy of man's nature, reasonable self-love must govern. Thus, without particular consideration of conscience, we may have a clear conception of the superior nature of one inward principle to another; and see that there really is this natural superiority, quite distinct from degrees of strength and prevalency.

Let us now take a view of the nature of man, as consisting partly of various appetites, passions, affections, and partly of the principle of reflection or conscience, leaving quite out all consideration of the different degrees of strength in which either of them prevail; and it will further appear that there is this natural superiority of one inward principle to another, and that it is even part of the idea of reflection or conscience.

Passion or appetite implies a direct simple tendency towards such and such objects, without distinction of the means by which they are to be obtained. Consequently it will often happen there will be a desire of particular objects, in cases where they cannot be obtained without manifest injury to others. Reflection or conscience comes in and disapproves the pursuit of them in these circumstances; but the desire remains. Which is to be obeyed, appetite or reflection? Cannot this question be answered from the economy and constitution of human nature merely, without saying which is strongest? Or need this at all come into

consideration? Would not the question be intelligibly and fully answered by saying, that the principle of reflection or conscience being compared with the various appetites, passions, and affections in men, the former is manifestly superior and chief, without regard to strength? And how often soever the latter happens to prevail, it is mere usurpation. The former remains in nature and in kind its superior; and every instance of such prevalence of the latter is an instance of breaking in upon and violation of the constitution of man.

All this is no more than the distinction which every body is acquainted with, between mere power and authority: only instead of being intended to express the difference between what is possible, and what is lawful in civil government; here it has been shown applicable to the several principles in the mind of man. Thus that principle, by which we survey, and either approve or disapprove our own heart, temper and actions, is not only to be considered as what is in its turn to have some influence; which may be said of every passion, of the lowest appetites: but likewise as being superior; as from its very nature manifestly claiming superiority over all others: insomuch that you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendency. This is a constituent part of the idea, that is, of the faculty itself; and to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength, as it has right; had it power, as it has manifest authority; it would absolutely govern the world.

This gives us a further view of the nature of man; shows us what course of life we were made for: not only that our real nature leads us to be influenced in some degree by reflection and conscience; but likewise in what degree we are to be influenced by it, if we will fall in with, and act agreeably to the constitution of our nature: that this faculty was placed within to be our proper governor; to direct and regulate all under principles, passions, and motives of action. This is its right and office: thus sacred is its authority. And how often soever men violate and rebelliously refuse to submit to it, for supposed interest which they cannot otherwise obtain, or for the sake of passion which they cannot

otherwise gratify; this makes no alteration as to the natural right and office of conscience.

Let us now turn this whole matter another way, and suppose there was no such thing at all as this natural supremacy of conscience; that there was no distinction to be made between one inward principle and another, but only that of strength; and see what would be the consequence.

Consider then, what is the latitude and compass of the actions of man with regard to himself, his fellow-creatures, and the Supreme Being? What are their bounds, besides that of our natural power? With respect to the first two, they are plainly no other than these: no man seeks misery as such for himself; and no one unprovoked does mischief to another for its own sake. For in every degree within these bounds, mankind knowingly from passion or wantonness bring ruin and misery upon themselves and others. And impiety and profaneness, I mean, what every one would call so who believes the being of God, have absolutely no bounds at all. Men blaspheme the Author of nature, formally and in words renounce their allegiance to their Creator. Put an instance then with respect to any one of these three. Though we should suppose profane swearing, and in general that kind of impiety now mentioned to mean nothing, yet it implies wanton disregard and irreverence towards an Infinite Being our Creator; and is this as suitable to the nature of man, as reverence and dutiful submission of heart towards that Almighty Being? Or suppose a man guilty of parricide, with all the circumstances of cruelty which such an action can admit of. This action is done in consequence of its principle being for the present strongest. And if there be no difference between inward principles, but only that of strength; the strength being given, you have the whole nature of the man given, so far as it relates to this matter. The action plainly corresponds to the principle, the principle being in that degree of strength it was: it therefore corresponds to the whole nature of the man. Upon comparing the actions and the whole nature, there arises no disproportion, there appears no unsuitableness between them. Thus the murder of a father and the nature of man correspond to each other, as the same nature and an act of filial duty. If there be no difference between inward principles, but only that of

strength, we can make no distinction between these two actions, considered as the actions of such a creature; but in our coolest hours must approve or disapprove them equally: than which nothing can be reduced to a greater absurdity.[2]

SERMON III.

The natural supremacy of reflection or conscience being 4
thus established, we may from it form a distinct notion of what is meant by human nature, when virtue is said to consist in following it, and vice in deviating from it.

As the idea of a civil constitution implies in it united a
strength, various subordinations under one direction, that of the supreme authority, the different strength of each particular member of the society not coming into the idea; whereas, if you leave out the subordination, the union, and the one direction, you destroy and lose it. So reason, several appetites, passions and affections, prevailing in different degrees of strength, is not that idea or notion of human nature; but that nature consists in these several principles considered as having a natural respect to each other, in the several passions being naturally subordinate to the one superior principle of reflection or conscience. Every bias, instinct, propension within, is a real part of our nature, but not the whole: add to these the superior faculty, whose office it is to adjust, manage, and preside over them, and take in this its natural superiority, and you complete the idea of human nature. And as in civil government the b

[2] [The doctrine of human depravity, at which Butler here glances, does not affect the justness of his reasoning. God intended that our passions and affections should all be gratified within proper limits; that self-love, which is but a just regard for our own happiness, should stimulate and control them; that all these principles should be subordinate to conscience; and conscience itself be enlightened and perfected by communion with Him. Evidences of this intention still remain, though conscience is dark, and often powerless. Self-love, violating duties owed to God and our neighbours, becomes selfishness; and passions which ought to *serve*, have assumed to *reign*. From 'the stately ruins' we may gather the design of the Builder, as justly perhaps, as if the temple had yet stood in all its beauty and completeness. See one of the noblest passages on this subject in 'Howe's Living Temple,' chap. iv., p. 128, Collins's Ed.]

constitution is broken in upon and violated by power and strength prevailing over authority; so the constitution of man is broken in upon and violated by the lower faculties or principles within prevailing over that which is in its nature supreme over them all. Thus, when it is said by ancient writers, that tortures and death are not so contrary to human nature as injustice; by this to be sure is not meant, that the aversion to the former in mankind is less strong and prevalent than their aversion to the latter: but that the former is only contrary to our nature considered in a partial view, and which takes in only the lowest part of it, that which we have in common with the brutes; whereas the latter is contrary to our nature, considered in a higher sense, as a system and constitution, contrary to the whole economy of man.[3]

1 [3] Every man in his physical nature is one individual single agent.
He has likewise properties and principles, each of which may be
considered separately, and without regard to the respects which they
have to each other. Neither of these are the nature we are taking
a view of. But it is the inward frame of man considered as a system
or constitution; whose several parts are united, not by a physical
principle of individuation, but by the respects they have to each
other; the chief of which is the subjection which the appetites, pas-
sions, and particular affections have to the one supreme principle
of reflection or conscience. The system or constitution is formed
by and consists in these respects and this subjection. Thus the
2 body is a system or constitution; so is a tree: so is every machine.
Consider all the several parts of a tree without the natural respects
they have to each other, and you have not at all the idea of a tree;
but add these respects, and this gives you the idea. The body may
be impaired by sickness, a tree may decay, a machine be out of
order, and yet the system and constitution of them not totally dis-
solved. There is plainly somewhat which answers to all this in the
moral constitution of man. Whoever will consider his own nature,
will see that the several appetites, passions, and particular affections,
have different respects amongst themselves. They are restraints upon,
3 and are in a proportion to each other. This proportion is just and
perfect, when all those under principles are perfectly coincident
with conscience, so far as their nature permits, and in all cases under
its absolute and entire direction. The least excess or defect, the
least alteration of the due proportions amongst themselves, or of
their coincidence with conscience, though not proceeding into

And from all these things put together, nothing can be more evident, than that, exclusive of revelation, man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as passion, humour, wilfulness, happen to carry him; which is the condition brute creatures are in: but that from his make, constitution or nature, he is in the strictest and most proper sense a law to himself. He hath the rule of right within. What is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it.

The inquiries which have been made by men of leisure after some general rule, the conformity to, or disagreement from which, should denominate our actions good or evil, are in many respects of great service. Yet let any plain honest man, before he engages in any course of action, ask himself, Is this I am going about right, or is it wrong? Is it good, or is it evil? I do not in the least doubt but that this question would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almost any fair man in almost any circumstance. Neither do there appear any cases which look like exceptions to this; but those of superstition, and of partiality to ourselves. Superstition may perhaps be somewhat of an exception; but partiality to ourselves is not; this being itself dishonesty. For a man to judge that to be the equitable, the moderate, the right part for him to act, which he would see to be hard, unjust, oppressive in another; this is plain vice, and can proceed only from great unfairness of mind.

But allowing that mankind hath the rule of right within himself, yet it may be asked, "What obligations are we

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action, is some degree of disorder in the moral constitution. But perfection, though plainly intelligible and supposable, was never attained by any man. If the higher principle of reflection maintains its place, and, as much as it can, corrects that disorder, and hinders it from breaking out into action, this is all that can be expected in such a creature as man. And though the appetites and passions have not their exact due proportion to each other; though they often strive for mastery with judgment or reflection; yet, since the superiority of this principle to all others is the chief respect which forms the constitution, so far as this superiority is maintained, the character, the man, is good, worthy, virtuous.

under to attend to and follow it?" I answer: It has been proved that man by his nature is a law to himself, without the particular distinct consideration of the positive sanctions of that law; the rewards and punishments which we feel, and those which from the light of reason we have ground to believe, are annexed to it. The question then carries its own answer along with it. Your obligation to obey this law, is its being the law of your nature. That your conscience approves of and attests to such a course of action, is itself alone an obligation. Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide; the guide assigned us by the Author of our nature. It therefore belongs to our condition of being, it is our duty to walk in that path and follow this guide without looking about to see whether we may not possibly forsake them with impunity.

5 However, let us hear what is to be said against obeying this law of our nature. And the sum is no more than this,
a "Why should we be concerned about anything out of and beyond ourselves? If we do find within ourselves regards to others, and restraints of we know not how many different kinds; yet, these being embarrassments, and hindering us from going the nearest way to our own good, why should we not endeavour to suppress and get over them?"

1 Thus people go on with words, which when applied to human nature, and the condition in which it is placed in this world, have really no meaning. For does not all this kind of talk go upon supposition, that our happiness in this world consists in somewhat quite distinct from regards to others; and that it is the privilege of vice to be without restraint or confinement? whereas on the contrary, the enjoyments, in a manner all the common enjoyments of life, even the pleasures of vice, depend upon these regards of one kind or another to our fellow-creatures. Throw off all regards to others, and we should be quite indifferent to infamy and to honour; there could be no such thing at all as ambition; and scarce any such thing as covetousness; for we should likewise be equally indifferent to the disgrace of poverty, the several neglects and kinds of contempt which accompany this state; and to the reputation of riches, the regard

and respect they usually procure. Neither is restraint by 2
any means peculiar to one course of life; but our very nature, exclusive of conscience, and our condition lays us under an absolute necessity of it. We cannot gain any end whatever without being confined to the proper means, which is often the most painful and uneasy confinement. And in numberless instances a present appetite cannot be gratified without such apparent and immediate ruin and misery, that the most dissolute man in the world chooses to forego the pleasure, rather than endure the pain.[4]

Is the meaning then, to indulge those regards to our fellow-creatures, and submit to those restraints, which upon the whole are attended with more satisfaction than uneasiness, and get over only those which bring more uneasiness and inconvenience than satisfaction? "Doubtless this was our meaning." You have changed sides then. Keep to this; be consistent with yourselves; and you and the men of virtue are in general perfectly agreed. But let us take care and avoid mistakes. Let it not be taken for granted that the temper of envy, rage, resentment, yields greater delight than meekness, forgiveness, compassion, and good will: especially when it is acknowledged that rage, envy, resentment, are in themselves mere misery; and the satisfaction arising from the indulgence of them is little more than relief from that misery; whereas the temper of compassion and benevolence is itself delightful; and the indulgence of it, by doing good, affords new positive delight and enjoyment. Let it not be taken for granted, that the satisfaction arising

[4] [Conscience *is* supreme among the powers of the soul. It must be remembered, however, that it is not absolutely supreme. It is not itself *our highest law*; but only *our interpretation of that law*. It is absolutely right, only when it agrees with that law. It may be wrong through want of clearness or fulness in the law, or through want of humility, and diligence in studying it. Hence the ethical paradox, noticed by Dr. Whewell. To act against one's conscience—to do what one thinks wrong—is always wrong: To act according to one's conscience—to do what one thinks right—is not always right. *As human nature* is, conscience needs to be enlightened, or it is no safe guide. "I am conscious," said an apostle, "of no wrong, yet am I not thereby justified. He that judgeth me, is the Lord."]

from the reputation of riches and power however obtained, and from the respect paid to them, is greater than the satisfaction arising from the reputation of justice, honesty, charity, and the esteem which is universally acknowledged to be their due. And if it be doubtful which of these satisfactions is the greatest, as there are persons who think neither of them very considerable, yet there can be no doubt concerning ambition and covetousness, virtue and a good mind, considered in themselves, and as leading to different courses of life; there can, I say, be no doubt, which temper and which course is attended with most peace and tranquillity of mind, which with most perplexity, vexation, and inconvenience. And both the virtues and vices which have been now mentioned, do in a manner equally imply in them regards of one kind or another to our fellow-creatures. And with respect to restraint and confinement: whoever will consider the restraints from fear and shame, the dissimulation, mean arts of concealment, servile compliances, one or other of which belong to almost every course of vice, will soon be convinced that the man of virtue is by no means upon a disadvantage in this respect. How many instances are there in which men feel and own and cry aloud under the chains of vice with which they are enthralled, and which yet they will not shake off? How many instances, in which persons manifestly go through more pains and self-denial to gratify a vicious passion, than would have been necessary to the conquest of it? To this is to be added, that when virtue is become habitual, when the temper of it is acquired, what was before confinement ceases to be so, by becoming choice and delight. Whatever restraint and guard upon ourselves may be needful to unlearn any unnatural distortion or odd gesture; yet, in all propriety of speech, natural behaviour must be the most easy and unrestrained. It is manifest that, in the common course of life, there is seldom any inconsistency between our duty and what is called interest. It is much seldomer that there is an inconsistency between duty and what is really our present interest; meaning by interest, happiness and satisfaction. Self-love then, though confined to the interest of the present world, does in general perfectly coincide with virtue, and leads us to one and the same course of life. But, whatever exceptions there are to this, which

are much fewer than they are commonly thought, all shall be set right at the final distribution of things. It is a manifest absurdity to suppose evil prevailing finally over good, under the conduct and administration of a perfect mind.[5]

The whole argument, which I have been now insisting upon, may be thus summed up and given you in one view. The nature of man is adapted to some course of action or other. Upon comparing some actions with this nature, they appear suitable and correspondent to it: from comparison of other actions with the same nature, there arises to our view some unsuitableness or disproportion. The correspondence of actions to the nature of the agent renders them natural; their disproportion to it, unnatural. That an action is correspondent to the nature of the agent, does not arise from its being agreeable to the principle which happens to be the strongest; for it may be so, and yet be quite disproportionate to the nature of the agent. The correspondence, therefore, or disproportion, arises from somewhat else. This can be nothing but a difference in nature and kind (altogether distinct from strength) between the inward principles. Some then are in nature and kind superior to others. And the Sum

[5] [Note here, what is more fully brought out, in one of Butler's Sermons (No. XI., 'On the love of God'), the connexion between his ethical and his religious systems. "To be a just and good man," says he, "plainly carries with it a peculiar love to justice and goodness, whether these principles are the objects of contemplation in himself or in others. . . . . These qualities anywhere would inspire reverence and love. . . . . Seen in God, where they exist in the highest degree, to whom we stand in intimate relation, whose character is in a sense our own, they inspire devout reverence and the warmest love. Between his attributes and our holiest feelings, there is as real a correspondence as between the lowest appetite and its object. . . . . As the whole attention of life should be to obey his commands, so the highest enjoyment of it must arise from the contemplation of his character, and our relation to it, from a consciousness of his favour and approbation, and from the exercise of those affections towards him which could not but be raised by his presence." . . . "That he is infinite in power, perfect in wisdom and goodness, makes no alteration, but only that he is the object of those affections, raised to the highest pitch."]

correspondence arises from the action being conformable to the higher principle; and the unsuitableness from its being contrary to it. Reasonable self-love and conscience are the chief or superior principles in the nature of man: because an action may be suitable to this nature, though all other principles be violated; but becomes unsuitable, if either of those are. Conscience and self-love, if we understand our true happiness, always lead us the same way. Duty and interest are perfectly coincident; for the most part in this world, but entirely and in every instance if we take in the future, and the whole; this being implied in the notion of a good and perfect administration of things. Thus they who have been so wise in their generation as to regard only their own supposed interest, at the expense and to the injury of others, shall at last find, that he who has given up all the advantages of the present world, rather than violate his conscience and the relations of life, has infinitely better provided for himself, and secured his own interest and happiness.[6]

[6] [Upon some minds, these speculations on the nature of virtue may produce the impression, that virtue itself is uncertain, a creation of men's fancy without any corresponding reality. Such a conclusion would be most unjust. All subjects are uncertain when men come to discuss their *essence*. The authority and importance of virtue moreover, are admitted on all sides, though men differ when they speak of the grounds on which its authority rests. Above all, these differences in the case of virtue, arise really from the diversity of her claims; and the true ground of those claims is to be ascertained, not by denying opposite theories, but by harmonizing and combining them. These conflicts have arisen, not because virtue has no supports, but because she has so many: and to appeal to these conflicts as an evidence of her baselessness, is to turn against her the very excellencies with which she is endowed. Let it be affirmed (with Hobbes), that virtue is the creation of human policy, the voice of the magistrate enjoining what is expedient, and that all virtuous emotion is a form of fear; with Cudworth, that it is harmony with the nature of things, anterior to all law; or with Clarke, that it is conformity to reason, and itself immutable; with Shaftesbury, that it is rather an object of taste than of reason, and that its excellence is perceived more by emotion than by judgment, or by a 'moral sense,' as Hutcheson holds; with many, that virtue is what conduces to happiness, *our own*, as Leibnitz, Buffier, and Paley hold, or *that of others*, as was held by Shaftesbury,

Hutcheson, and in some measure by Butler, and Smith. Let it be affirmed, with Paley, that virtue is utility, and the love of the virtuous, the love of the useful; with Bentham, that it is happiness, and the desire to secure it; with Edwards, that it is love of moral excellence, and in proportion to its degrees; with Malebranche, that it is 'love of order;' with Smith, that it is what excites moral sympathy; with Hartley, that it owes its claims to association, or (with Brown) to suggestion; with Butler, that it is what is just and good, and shown to be so by our own nature, and by other indications of God's will. Let all these theories on the nature of virtue, or of virtuous emotion, be affirmed; and with limits and restrictions we may admit them all. To Hobbes it may be said, virtue does lead to the good of the community. All law ought to be in harmony with it, and we obey, both for fear and for conscience' sake. To Cudworth and Clarke, it may be said, that there are moral relations as certain as mathematical relations, and that morality is in the highest degree reasonable. To the rest, it may be said, in all virtue there are qualities which gratify the taste, as much as they satisfy the reason. It promotes happiness, material and spiritual, our own and that of others; and so is its own reward. It is useful, peace and prosperity ever following in its train; nor is there any surer way of securing 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' than by diffusing it. Virtue is the highest 'excellence,' the most perfect 'order.' It excites sympathy, and the connexion between virtuous acts and correspondent feeling, is one of the most instructive instances of those laws of suggestion, on which Hartley and Brown insist. "We would not dissever these testimonies, but bind them together into the sum and strength of an accumulative argument . . . . Each party hath selected but one of its claims, and in the anxiety to exact it, would shed a comparative obscurity over all the rest. This is the contest between them—not whether morality be destitute of claims; but what out of the number that she possesses is the great and pre-eminent claim on which man should do her homage. Their controversy, perhaps, never may be settled, but to make the cause of virtue suffer on this account, would be to make it suffer from the very force and abundance of its recommendations."—*Chalmers' Bridgewater Tr.* p. 280.

In confirmation of these views, it may be noticed that Scripture enforces holiness by appealing to all the emotions on which these theories rest; fear, love, desire of personal happiness, good-will to our fellows, reverence for God. Sin, on the other hand, is described as 'vanity' (what cannot profit); 'misery' (what destroys happiness); 'unfitness' (not suited either to our nature or relations)

'wickedness,' (intrinsically wrong, degrading the creature, and dis pleasing to the Creator).

Keeping in mind all these discussions, and wishing to settle th questions raised by them with the Bible in our hands, let it be said "Here is a *wrong act*, what is the quality in it which we condemn, an for which we call it wrong?" It may be illegal: it is certainly mis chievous to the agent, and likely to be injurious to society: it i unreasonable and inconsistent with the relations of things: it vio lates our moral nature: it is condemned in Scripture, and so i opposed to the Divine will: anterior to that will, it is opposed t the Divine nature. All these answers have been given. The firs three are clearly insufficient; the last four are more satisfactory and are but different forms of saying substantially the same thing.

Let it be said again, "How is this act *known* to be wrong?" and it is answered, "Sometimes by the decision of law; sometime by its tendency, seen to be mischievous to ourselves, or to society sometimes by its evident inconsistency with our relations (as i ingratitude and injustice), or our reason; sometimes by its violatin our nature (as when we gratify passion against conscience); oftenest and with complete certainty, by direct appeals to Scripture, wher the Divine will (imperfectly taught by law, by utility, and b nature), is fully revealed."

Let it be asked again, "With what *state of mind* is this wron act to be regarded?" And the answer is at hand, "We *fear* th consequences, from law, from society, and from continued self reproach: our *reason* condemns it as unfitting: our *conscience* dis approves it, adding to the decision of the reason, moral disappro bation: The *Christian's heart*, moreover, feels besides, hatred t the thing itself (quite apart from all results), as something abhorren from his nature, and displeasing to a God of infinite purity an love."

Such are some of the questions with which ethical science i conversant: besides defining duties, it seeks to analyse virtuou acts, and to indicate their essence; it shows from what sourc our knowledge of duties is derived; and defines the moral state of heart with which they are regarded: and such is in substanc and in brief the answer of the Bible.]

SERMON IV

UPON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TONGUE.

JAMES i. 26.

If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

THE translation of this text would be more determinate by being more literal, thus: If any man among you seemeth to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain. This determines that the words, but deceiveth his own heart, are not put in opposition to seemeth to be religious, but to bridleth not his tongue. The certain determinate meaning of the text then being, that he who seemeth to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, but in that particular deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain; we may observe somewhat very forcible and expressive in these words of St. James. As if the apostle had said, No man surely can make any pretences to religion who does not at least believe that he bridleth his tongue; if he puts on any appearance or face of religion, and yet does not govern his tongue, he must surely deceive himself in that particular, and think he does; and whoever is so unhappy as to deceive himself in this, to imagine he keeps that unruly faculty in due subjection, when indeed he does not, whatever the other part of his life be, his religion is vain; the government of the tongue being a most material restraint which virtue lays us under; without it no man can be truly religious.

In treating upon this subject I will consider,

First, what is the general vice or fault here referred to; or what disposition in men is supposed in moral reflections and precepts concerning bridling the tongue.

Secondly, when it may be said of any one, that he has a due government over himself in this respect.

I. Now the fault referred to, and the disposition supposed, in precepts and reflections concerning the government of the tongue, is not evil-speaking from malice, nor lying, nor bearing false witness from indirect selfish designs. The dis-

position to these, and the actual vices themselves, all come under other subjects. The tongue may be employed about and made to serve all the purposes of vice in tempting and deceiving, in perjury and injustice. But the thing here supposed and referred to is talkativeness; a disposition to be talking abstracted from the consideration of what is to be said, with very little or no regard to or thought of doing either good or harm. And let not any imagine this to be a slight matter, and that it deserves not to have so great weight laid upon it, till he has considered what evil is implied in it, and the bad effects which follow from it. It is perhaps true, that they who are addicted to this folly would choose to confine themselves to trifles and indifferent subjects, and so intend only to be guilty of being impertinent; but as they cannot go on for ever talking of nothing, as common matters will not afford a sufficient fund for perpetual continued discourse; when subjects of this kind are exhausted they will go on to defamation, scandal, divulging of secrets, their own secrets as well as those of others, anything rather than be silent. They are plainly hurried on in the heat of their talk to say quite different things from what they first intended, and which they afterwards wish unsaid; or improper things, which they had no other end in saying but only to afford employment to their tongue: and if these people expect to be heard and regarded (for there are some content merely with talking), they will invent to engage your attention; and when they have heard the least imperfect hint of an affair, they will out of their own head add the circumstances of time and place, and other matters to make out their story, and give the appearance of probability to it; not that they have any concern about being believed, otherwise than as a means of being heard. The thing is to engage your attention, to take you up wholly for the present time; what reflections will be made afterwards is in truth the least of their thoughts. And further, when persons who indulge themselves in these liberties of the tongue are in any degree offended with another, as little disgusts and misunderstandings will be, they allow themselves to defame and revile such an one without any moderation or bounds, though the offence is so very slight that they themselves would not do, nor perhaps wish him an injury in any other way; and

in this case the scandal and revilings are chiefly owing to talkativeness and not bridling their tongue, and so come under our present subject. The least occasion in the world will make the humour break out in this particular way, or in another. It is like a torrent which must and will flow, but the least thing imaginable will first of all give it either this or another direction, turn it into this or that channel; or like a fire, the nature of which, when in a heap of combustible matter, is to spread and lay waste all around, but any one of a thousand little accidents will occasion it to break out first either in this or another particular part.

The subject then before us, though it does run up into and can scarce be treated as entirely distinct from all others, yet it needs not be so much mixed or blended with them as it often is. Every faculty and power may be used as the instrument of premeditated vice and wickedness, merely as the most proper and effectual means of executing such designs: but if a man, from deep malice and desire of revenge, should meditate a falsehood with a settled design to ruin his neighbour's reputation, and should with great coolness and deliberation spread it, nobody would choose to say of such an one that he had no government of his tongue. A man may use the faculty of speech as an instrument of false witness, who yet has so entire a command over that faculty as never to speak but from forethought and cool design. Here the crime is injustice and perjury; and, strictly speaking, no more belongs to the present subject than perjury and injustice in any other way; but there is such a thing as a disposition to be talking for its own sake, from which persons often say anything, good or bad, of others merely as a subject of discourse, according to the particular temper they themselves happen to be in, and to pass away the present time. There is likewise to be observed in persons such a strong and eager desire of engaging attention to what they say, that they will speak good or evil, truth or otherwise, merely as one or the other seems to be most hearkened to; and this, though it is sometimes joined, is not the same with the desire of being thought important and men of consequence. There is in some such a disposition to be talking, that an offence of the slightest kind, and such as would not raise any other resentment, yet raises, if I may so speak, the

resentment of the tongue, puts it into a flame, into the most ungovernable motions. This outrage, when the person it respects is present, we distinguish in the lower rank of people by a peculiar term; and let it be observed, that though the decencies of behaviour are a little kept, the same outrage and virulence, indulged when he is absent, is an offence of the same kind. But not to distinguish any further in this manner; men run into faults and follies, which cannot so properly be referred to any one general head as this, that they have not a due government over their tongue.

And this unrestrained volubility and wantonness of speech is the occasion of numberless evils and vexations in life. It begets resentment in him who is the subject of it; sows the seed of strife and dissension amongst others; and inflames little disgusts and offences, which if let alone would wear away of themselves. It is often of as bad effect upon the good name of others as deep envy or malice; and, to say the least of it in this respect, it destroys and perverts a certain equity of the utmost importance to society to be observed, namely, that praise and dispraise, a good or bad character, should always be bestowed according to desert. The tongue used in such a licentious manner is like a sword in the hand of a madman; it is employed at random, it can scarce possibly do any good, and for the most part does a world of mischief; and implies not only great folly and a trifling spirit, but great viciousness of mind, great indifference to truth and falsity, and to the reputation, welfare, and good of others. So much reason is there for what St. James says of the tongue,[1] "It is a fire, a world of iniquity; it defileth the whole body, setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell." This is the faculty or disposition which we are required to keep a guard upon; these are the vices and follies it runs into, when not kept under due restraint.

II. Wherein the due government of the tongue consists, or when it may be said of any one in a moral and religious sense that he bridleth his tongue, I come now to consider.

The due and proper use of any natural faculty or power is to be judged of by the end and design for which it was

[1] Chap. iii. 6.

given us. The chief purpose, for which the faculty of speech was given to man, is plainly that we might communicate our thoughts to each other, in order to carry on the affairs of the world, for business, and for our improvement in knowledge and learning; but the good Author of our nature designed us not only necessaries, but likewise enjoyment and satisfaction, in that being he hath graciously given, and in that condition of life he hath placed us in. There are secondary uses of our faculties; they administer to delight as well as to necessity, and as they are equally adapted to both, there is no doubt but he intended them for our gratification as well as for the support and continuance of our being. The secondary use of speech is to please and be entertaining to each other in conversation. This is, in every respect, allowable and right; it unites men closer in alliances and friendships, gives us a fellow-feeling of the prosperity and unhappiness of each other, and is in several respects serviceable to virtue and to promote good behaviour in the world; and provided there be not too much time spent in it, if it were considered only in the way of gratification and delight, men must have strange notions of God and of religion to think that He can be offended with it, or that it is in any way inconsistent with the strictest virtue; but the truth is, such sort of conversation, though it has no particular good tendency, yet it has a general good one; it is social and friendly, and tends to promote humanity, good nature, and civility.

As the end and use, so likewise the abuse of speech, relates to the one or other of these, either to business or to conversation. As to the former, deceit in the management of business and affairs does not properly belong to the subject now before us, though one may just mention that multitude, that endless number of words with which business is perplexed, when a much fewer would, as it should seem, better serve the purpose, but this must be left to those who understand the matter. The government of the tongue, considered as a subject of itself, relates chiefly to conversation, to that kind of discourse which usually fills up the time spent in friendly meetings and visits of civility; and the danger is, lest persons entertain themselves and others at the expense of their wisdom and their virtue, and to the

injury or offence of their neighbour. If they will observe and keep clear of these they may be as free, and easy, and unreserved as they can desire.

The cautions to be given for avoiding these dangers, and to render conversation innocent and agreeable, fall under the following particulars:—Silence; talking of indifferent things; and, which makes up too great a part of conversation, giving of characters, speaking well or evil of others.

The wise man observes, that "there is a time to speak and a time to keep silence." One meets with people in the world who seem never to have made the last of these observations, and yet these great talkers do not at all speak from their having anything to say, as every sentence shows, but only from their inclination to be talking; their conversation is merely an exercise of the tongue, no other humane faculty has any share in it. It is strange these persons can help reflecting that unless they have in truth a superior capacity, and are in an extraordinary manner furnished for conversation, if they are entertaining it is at their own expense. Is it possible that it should never come into people's thoughts to suspect whether or no it be to their advantage to show so very much of themselves? "Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom."[2] Remember likewise there are persons who love fewer words, an inoffensive sort of people, and who deserve some regard, though of too still and composed tempers for you. Of this number was the son of Sirach, for he plainly speaks from experience, when he says, "As hills of sand are to the steps of the aged, so is one of many words to a quiet man." But one would think it should be obvious to every one that when they are in company with their superiors of any kind, in years, knowledge, and experience; when proper and useful subjects are discoursed of which they cannot bear a part in, that these are times for silence; when they should learn to hear and be attentive, at least, in their turn. It is, indeed, a very unhappy way these people are in; they in a manner cut themselves out from all advantage of conversation except that of being entertained with their own talk, their business in coming into company not being at all to be in-

[2] Job xiii.

formed, to hear, to learn, but to display themselves, or rather to exert their faculty, and talk without any design at all; and, if we consider conversation as an entertainment, as somewhat to unbend the mind—as a diversion from the cares, the business, and the sorrows of life—it is of the very nature of it that the discourse be mutual: this, I say, is implied in the very notion of what we distinguish by conversation or being in company. Attention to the continued discourse of one alone grows more painful often than the cares and business we come to be diverted from; he, therefore, who imposes this upon us, is guilty of a double offence, arbitrarily enjoining silence upon all the rest, and likewise obliging them to this painful attention.

I am sensible these things are apt to be passed over as too little to come into a serious discourse; but in reality men are obliged, even in point of morality and virtue, to observe all the decencies of behaviour. The greatest evils in life have had their rise from somewhat which was thought of too little importance to be attended to; and as to the matter we are now upon it is absolutely necessary to be considered, for if people will not maintain a due government over themselves, in regarding proper times and seasons for silence, but will be talking, they certainly, whether they design it or not at first, will go on to scandal and evil speaking and divulging secrets.

If it were needful to say anything further to persuade men to learn this lesson of silence, one might put them in mind how insignificant they render themselves by this excessive talkativeness, insomuch that, if they do chance to say anything which deserves to be attended to and regarded, it is lost in the variety and abundance which they utter of another sort.

The occasions of silence then are obvious, and one would think should be easily distinguished by everybody: namely, when a man has nothing to say; or nothing, but what is better unsaid: better, either in regard to the particular persons he is present with; or from its being an interruption to conversation itself; or to conversation of a more agreeable kind; or better, lastly, with regard to himself. I will end this particular with two reflections of the wise man: one of which, in the strongest manner, exposes the ridiculous

part of this licentiousness of the tongue; and the other, the great danger and viciousness of it. "When he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool."[3] The other is, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin."[4]

As to the government of the tongue in respect to talking upon indifferent subjects: after what has been said concerning the due government of it in respect to the occasions and times for silence, there is little more necessary than only to caution men to be fully satisfied that the subjects are indeed of an indifferent nature, and not to spend too much time in conversation of this kind. But persons must be sure to take heed, that the subject of their discourse be at least of an indifferent nature; that it be no way offensive to virtue, religion, or good manners; that it be not of a licentious, dissolute sort, this leaving always ill impressions upon the mind; that it be no way injurious or vexatious to others; and that too much time be not spent this way, to the neglect of those duties and offices of life which belong to their station and condition in the world. However, though there is not any necessity that men should aim at being important and weighty in every sentence they speak: yet since useful subjects, at least of some kinds, are as entertaining as others; a wise man, even when he desires to unbend his mind from business, would choose that the conversation might turn upon somewhat instructive.

The last thing is, the government of the tongue as relating to discourse of the affairs of others, and giving of characters. These are in a manner the same: and one can scarce call it an indifferent subject, because discourse upon it almost perpetually runs into somewhat criminal.

And first of all, it were very much to be wished that this did not take up so great a part of conversation, because it is indeed a subject of a dangerous nature. Let any one consider the various interests, competitions, and little misunderstandings which arise amongst men, and he will soon see that he is not unprejudiced and impartial, that he is not, as I may speak, neutral enough to trust himself with talking of the character and concerns of his neighbour in a free, careless, and unreserved manner. There is perpetually, and

[3] Eccles. x. 3. [4] Prov. x. 19.

often it is not attended to, a rivalship amongst people of one kind or another, in respect to wit, beauty, learning, fortune: and that one thing will insensibly influence them to speak to the disadvantage of others, even where there is no formed malice or ill design. Since therefore it is so hard to enter into this subject without offending; the first thing to be observed is, that people should learn to decline it; to get over that strong inclination most have to be talking of the concerns and behaviour of their neighbour.

But since it is impossible that this subject should be wholly excluded conversation, and since it is necessary that the characters of men should be known, the next thing is, that it is a matter of importance what is said; and, therefore, that we should be religiously scrupulous and exact to say nothing, either good or bad, but what is true. I put it thus, because it is in reality of as great importance to the good of society that the characters of bad men should be known, as that the characters of good men should. People who are given to scandal and detraction may indeed make an ill use of this observation; but truths, which are of service towards regulating our conduct, are not to be disowned, or even concealed, because a bad use may be made of them. This however would be effectually prevented, if these two things were attended to: first, that, though it is equally of bad consequence to society, that men should have either good or ill characters which they do not deserve; yet, when you say somewhat good of a man which he does not deserve, there is no wrong done him in particular; whereas, when you say evil of a man which he does not deserve, here is a direct formal injury, a real piece of injustice done him. This therefore makes a wide difference; and gives us, in point of virtue, much greater latitude in speaking well than ill of others. Secondly, a good man is friendly to his fellow-creatures, and a lover of mankind; and so will, upon every occasion, and often without any, say all the good he can of everybody: but, so far as he is a good man, will never be disposed to speak evil of any, unless there be some other reason for it, besides barely that it is true. If he be charged with having given an ill character, he will scarce think it a sufficient justification of himself to say it was a true one; unless he can also give some further account how

he came to do so. A just indignation against particular instances of villany, where they are great and scandalous; or to prevent an innocent man from being deceived and betrayed, when he has great trust and confidence in one who does not deserve it. Justice must be done to every part of a subject, when we are considering it. If there be a man, who bears a fair character in the world, whom yet we know to be without faith or honesty, to be really an ill man; it must be allowed in general, that we shall do a piece of service to society, by letting such a one's true character be known. This is no more than what we have an instance of in our Saviour himself;[5] though he was mild and gentle beyond example. However, no words can express too strongly the caution which should be used in such a case as this.

Upon the whole matter: if people would observe the obvious occasions of silence; if they would subdue the inclination to tale-bearing; and that eager desire to engag attention, which is an original disease in some minds; the would be in little danger of offending with their tongue and would, in a moral and religious sense, have due govern ment over it.

I will conclude with some precepts and reflections of th son of Sirach upon this subject. "Be swift to hear: and, thou hast understanding, answer thy neighbour; if not, la thy hand upon thy mouth. Honour and shame is in tall A man of an ill tongue is dangerous in his city, and he tha is rash in his talk shall be hated. A wise man will hold h tongue till he see opportunity; but a babbler and a fool wi regard no time. He that useth many words shall be al horred; and he that taketh to himself authority therei shall be hated. A backbiting tongue hath disquieted man strong cities hath it pulled down, and overthrown the hous of great men. The tongue of a man is his fall; but if th love to hear, thou shalt receive understanding."

[5] Mark xii. 38–40.

SERMONS V., VI.

UPON COMPASSION.[1]

[I ON compassion as a principle of human nature. Sermon V. INTRODUCTORY.

a Compassion as natural as self-love.

Note on Hobbes' doctrine,

1 He holds that compassion is care for ourselves.

2 This confounds different things,

3 And makes fear and compassion identical.

4 Which are yet admitted by all to be different, as is clear from a particular case.

5 Absurdity shown from the greater pity felt for friends than for others; a fact inexplicable on Hobbes' view.

6 Just accounts of human nature important.

7 Pity and fear are often both felt when men contemplate distress;

8 Which are instances of sympathy—the quality Hobbes denies. This quality neither self-love nor benevolence.

[[1] The following sermons of Bishop Butler have a close connexion with his ethical and religious system. The first Three Sermons on Human Nature contain the essential principle of his method of study, and from them may be gathered the course of reasoning likely to be adopted by him in similar cases. In the following sermons he considers four sets of affections: Compassion (v. vi.), Resentment (viii. ix.), Benevolence (xi. xii.) or love to our neighbours, and Piety or love to God (xiii. xiv.) In each, he shows that men possess these affections; he then considers for what end men are endowed with them; and, from the consideration of the end for which these affections were given, he deduces and enforces the appropriate duty. The sphere and limits of each affection are hence easily ascertained. The germs of many of the thoughts are contained in the Three Sermons; but the development here given is both interesting and important.

The grounds on which all the duties connected with these affections are here based are somewhat peculiar. Some say that these duties are obligatory, because they are conducive to our happiness; others, because they are enjoined by special command: Butler says it is because they are in conformity with God's general intentions as shown in the constitution of our nature.]

b Compassion for misery stronger than sympathy with joy: reason for the force and distinctness of this feeling.

c Not a weakness, any more than our senses are. It belongs to our nature, and is necessary to aid and perfect our reason.

1 First, compassion and kindred affections increase our happiness.

a Compassion is part of our sympathy, itself pleasurable when it contemplates the happiness of others.

b Even when exercised towards suffering compassion diminishes it, and

c Produces a calm satisfaction:

d While a callousness of feeling is incompatible with noble enjoyment.

2 Secondly, compassion and kindred affections prompt and guide men in duty.

a They are to reason, what particular appetites are to self-love; giving the distressed access to us in a way otherwise impossible.

b Even unfeeling men are restrained by a regard for the compassion of the world towards the suffering.

c Stoical apathy a diseased condition, which yet leaves its victims subject to many base passions.

d Hardness of heart originates in such a love of pleasure as disregards duty, and is yet destructive of much enjoyment.

e Compassion peculiarly strong in Him who was also perfect in holiness.

Conclusion: Over-refinement in morals and religion highly mischievous.

II On compassion, its uses and limits, Sermon VI.

Intro. The purpose or final cause of affections is discoverable, and, when discovered, is highly instructive.

Men can occasion misery more than happiness, and hence they need compassion in a high degree, to check the exercise of this power.

3 The final cause of compassion, and its consequent limits.

a It prevents misery, restraining envy, etc.

b It relieves misery, as do other things.

It is a call of Nature, and

Preferable even to mere good-will; for the objects of it have more need, and we are better able to help them.

It may be exercised in excess; but the greater danger is on the side of insensibility.

4 Uses of the foregoing reflections.

a As men have more power in diminishing misery than in promoting happiness, it is wise to seek freedom from misery ("peace") rather than high enjoyments in life.

b, c, d.]

V.

ROMANS xii. 15.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep.

I
INTRO.

EVERY man is to be considered in two capacities, the private and public: as designed to pursue his own interest, and likewise to contribute to the good of others. Whoever will consider, may see, that in general there is no contrariety between these; but that from the original constitution of man, and the circumstances he is placed in, they perfectly coincide, and mutually carry on each other. But, amongst the great variety of affections or principles of action in our nature, some in their primary intention and design seem to belong to the single or private, others to the public or social capacity. The affections required in the text are of the latter sort. When we rejoice in the prosperity of others, and compassionate their distresses, we, as it were, substitute them for ourselves, their interest for our own; and have the same kind of pleasure in their prosperity and sorrow in their distress, as we have from reflection upon our own. Now there is nothing strange or unaccountable in our being thus carried out, and affected towards the interests of others.[2] a

[[2] The reasoning of this sermon, and of the note of Butler on Hobbes, will be more intelligible from a perusal of Hobbes' account of compassion: "Pity is imagination or fiction of future calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the sense of another man's calamity. But when it lighteth on such as we think have not deserved the same, the compassion is greater, because then there appeareth more probability that the same may happen to us; for the evil that happeneth to an innocent man may happen to every man. But when we see a man suffer for great crimes, which we cannot easily think will fall upon ourselves, the pity is the less. And therefore men are apt to pity those whom they love; for, whom they love they think worthy of good, and therefore not worthy of calamity. Thence it is also that men pity the vices of some persons at the

For, if there be any appetite, or any inward principle besides self-love; why may there not be an affection to the good of our fellow-creatures, and delight from that affection being gratified, and uneasiness from things going contrary to it?[3]

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first sight only, out of love to their aspect. The contrary of pity is hardness of heart, proceeding either from slowness of imagination, or some extreme great opinion of their own exemption from the like calamity, or from hatred of all or most men."—'Human Nature,' chap. ix.]

1 [3] There being manifestly this appearance of men's substituting others for themselves, and being carried out and affected towards them as towards themselves, some persons, who have a system which excludes every affection to this sort, have taken a pleasant method to solve it, and tell you it is not another you are at all concerned about, but yourself only, when you feel the affection called compassion, *i.e.* Here is a plain matter of fact, which men cannot reconcile with the general account they think fit to give of things; they therefore, instead of that manifest fact, substitute another, which is reconcilable to their own scheme. For does not every-
2 body by compassion, mean an affection, the object of which is another in distress? Instead of this, but designing to have it mistaken for this, they speak of an affection or passion, the object of which is ourselves, or danger to ourselves. Hobbes defines pity, imagination, or fiction, of future calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the sense (he means sight or knowledge) of another man's
3 calamity. Thus fear and compassion would be the same idea, and a fearful and a compassionate man the same character, which every
4 one immediately sees are totally different. Further, to those w[illegible] give any scope to their affections, there is no perception or inward feeling more universal than this; that one who has been merciful and compassionate throughout the course of his behaviour, should himself be treated with kindness, if he happens to fall into circumstances of distress. Is fear then, or cowardice, so great a recommendation to the favour of the bulk of mankind? Or is it not plain, that mere fearlessness (and therefore not the contrary) is one of the most popular qualifications? This shows that mankind are not affected towards compassion as fear, but as somewhat totally different.

5 Nothing would more expose such accounts as these of the affections which are favourable and friendly to our fellow-creatures, than to substitute the definitions which this author, and others who follow his steps, give of such affections, instead of the words by which they are commonly expressed. Hobbes, after having laid

Of those two, delight in the prosperity of others and compassion for their distresses, the last is felt much more generally than the former. Though men do not universally rejoice with all whom they see rejoice, yet, accidental obstacles removed, they naturally compassionate all in some degree whom they see in distress, so far as they have any real perception or sense of that distress: insomuch that words expressing this latter, pity, compassion, frequently occur; whereas we have scarce any single one, by which the former is distinctly expressed. Congratulation indeed answers condolence: but both these words are intended to signify certain forms of civility, rather than any inward sensation or feeling. This difference or inequality is so remarkable, that we plainly consider compassion as itself an original, distinct, particular affection in human nature; whereas to rejoice in the good of others, is only a conse-

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down that pity or compassion is only fear for ourselves, goes on to explain the reason why we pity our friends in distress more than others. Now substitute the definition instead of the word pity in this place, and the inquiry will be, why we fear our friends, etc., which words (since he really does not mean why we are afraid of them), make no question or sentence at all. So that common language, the words "to compassionate," "to pity," cannot be accommodated to his account of compassion. The very joining of the words "to pity our friends," is a direct contradiction to his definition of pity; because those words so joined, necessarily express that our friends are the objects of the passion; whereas his definition of it asserts, that ourselves (or danger to ourselves) are the only objects of it. He might indeed have avoided this absurdity, by plainly saying what he is going to account for, namely, why the sight of the innocent, or of our friends in distress, raises greater fear for ourselves than the sight of other persons in distress. But had he put the thing thus plainly, the fact itself would have been doubted, that the sight of our friends in distress raises in us greater fear for ourselves, than the sight of others in distress. And in the next place it would immediately have occurred to every one, that the fact now mentioned, which at least is doubtful, whether true or false, was not the same with this fact, which nobody ever doubted, that the sight of our friends in distress raises in us greater compassion than the sight of others in distress: Every one, I say, would have seen that these are not the same, but

quence of the general affection of love and goodwill to them. The reason and account of which matter is this. When a man has obtained any particular advantage or felicity, his end is gained; and he does not in that particular want the assistance of another: there was therefore no need of a distinct affection towards that felicity of another already obtained; neither would such affection directly carry him to do good to that person; whereas men in distress want assistance; and compassion leads us directly to assist them. The object of the former is the present felicity of another, the object of the latter is the present misery of another; it is easy to see that the latter wants a particular affection for

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two different inquiries; and consequently, that fear and compassion are not the same. Suppose a person to be in real danger, and by some means or other to have forgot it; any trifling accident, any sound might alarm him, recall the danger to his remembrance, and renew his fear: but it is almost too grossly ridiculous (though it is to show an absurdity) to speak of that sound or accident as an object of compassion; and yet according to Mr. Hobbes, our greatest friend in distress is no more to us, no more the object of compassion or of any affection in our heart. Neither the one or the other raises any emotion in our mind, but only the thoughts of our liableness to calamity, and the fear of it; and both equally do this.
6 It is fit such sort of accounts of human nature should be shown to be what they really are, because there is raised upon them a general scheme, which undermines the whole foundation of common justice and honesty. See Hobbes 'Of Human Nature,' c. 9, § 10.

7 There are often three distinct perceptions or inward feelings, upon sight of persons in distress: real sorrow and concern for the misery of our fellow-creatures; some degree of satisfaction from a consciousness of our freedom from that misery; and, as the mind passes on from one thing to another, it is not unnatural from such an occasion to reflect upon our own liableness to the same or other calamities. The two last frequently accompany the first, but it is the first only which is properly compassion, of which the distressed are the objects, and which directly carries us with calmness and thought to their assistance. Any one of these, from various and complicated reasons, may in particular cases prevail over the other two; and there are, I suppose, instances where the bare sight of distress, without our feeling any compassion for it, may be the occasion of either or both of the two latter perceptions. One might add that if there be really any such thing as the fiction or imagina-

its relief, and that the former does not want one, because it does not want assistance. And upon supposition of a distinct affection in both cases, the one must rest in the exercise of itself, having nothing further to gain; the other does not rest in itself, but carries us on to assist the distressed.

But, supposing these affections natural to the mind, particularly the last; "Has not each man troubles enough of his own? must he indulge an affection which appropriates to himself those of others? which leads him to contract the least desirable of all friendships, friendships with the unfortunate? Must we invert the known rule of prudence, and choose to associate ourselves with the distressed? Or, allowing that we ought, so far as it is in our power to relieve them, yet is it not better to do this from reason and duty? Does not passion and affection of every kind perpetually mislead us? Nay, is not passion and affection itself a weakness, and what a perfect being must be entirely free from?" Perhaps so, but it is mankind I am speaking of; imperfect creatures, and who, naturally, and from the condition we are placed in, necessarily depend upon each other. With respect to such creatures, it would be found of as bad consequence to eradicate all natural affections, as to be entirely governed by them. This would almost sink us to the condition of brutes, and that would leave us without a sufficient principle of action. Reason alone, whatever any one may wish, is not in reality a sufficient motive of

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tion of danger to ourselves from sight of the miseries of others, which Hobbes speaks of, and which he has absurdly mistaken for the whole of compassion; if there be anything of this sort common to mankind, distinct from the reflection of reason, it would be a most remarkable instance of what was farthest from his thoughts, namely, of a mutual sympathy between each particular of the species, a fellow-feeling common to mankind. It would not indeed be an example of our substituting others for ourselves, but it would be an example of our substituting ourselves for others. And as it would not be an instance of benevolence, so neither would it be any instance of self-love. For this phantom of danger to ourselves, naturally rising to view upon sight of the distresses of others, would be no more an instance of love to ourselves, than the pain of hunger is.

virtue in such a creature as man; but this reason joined with those affections which God has impressed upon his heart; and when these are allowed scope to exercise themselves, but under strict government and direction of reason, then it is we act suitably to our nature, and to the circumstances God has placed us in. Neither is affection itself at all a weakness, nor does it argue defect, any otherwise than as our senses and appetites do, they belong to our condition of nature, and are what we cannot be without. God Almighty is, to be sure, unmoved by passion or appetite, unchanged by affection, but then it is to be added, that he neither sees, nor hears, nor perceives things by any senses like ours, but in a manner infinitely more perfect. Now, as it is an absurdity almost too gross to be mentioned, for a man to endeavour to get rid of his senses, because the Supreme Being discerns things more perfectly without them; it is as real, though not so obvious an absurdity, to endeavour to eradicate the passions he has given us, because he is without them. For, since our passions are as really a part of our constitution as our senses, since the former as really belong to our condition of nature as the latter; to get rid of either, is equally a violation of and breaking in upon that nature and constitution he has given us. Both our senses and our passions are a supply to the imperfection of our nature; thus they show that we are such sort of creatures, as to stand in need of those helps which higher orders of creatures do not. But it is not the supply but the deficiency, as it is not a remedy but a disease which is the imperfection. However, our appetites, passions, senses, no way imply disease, nor indeed do they imply deficiency or imperfection of any sort, but only this, that the constitution of Nature, according to which God has made us, is such as to require them. And it is so far from being true, that a wise man must entirely suppress compassion, and all fellow-feeling for others, as a weakness; and trust to reason alone, to teach and enforce upon him the practice of the several charities we owe to our kind, that, on the contrary, even the bare exercise of such affections would itself be for the good and happiness of the world, and the imperfection of the higher principles of reason and religion in man, the little influence they have upon our practice, and the strength and pre-

valency of contrary ones plainly require these affections, to be a restraint upon these latter, and a supply to the deficiencies of the former.

First, The very exercise itself of these affections in a just and reasonable manner and degree, would upon the whole increase the satisfactions, and lessen the miseries of life.

It is the tendency and business of virtue and religion to procure, as much as may be, universal good-will, trust, and friendship amongst mankind. If this could be brought to obtain; and each man enjoyed the happiness of others, as every one does that of a friend; and looked upon the success and prosperity of his neighbour, as every one does upon that of his children and family; it is too manifest to be insisted upon, how much the enjoyments of life would be increased. There would be so much happiness introduced into the world, without any deduction or inconvenience from it, in proportion as the precept of rejoicing with those who rejoice was universally obeyed. Our Saviour has owned this good affection as belonging to our nature, in the parable of the lost sheep; and does not think it to the disadvantage of a perfect state, to represent its happiness as capable of increase from reflection upon that of others.

But since in such a creature as man, compassion or sorrow for the distress of others, seems so far necessarily connected with joy in their prosperity, as that whoever rejoices in one must unvoidably compassionate the other; there cannot be that delight or satisfaction, which appears to be so considerable, without the inconveniences, whatever they are, of compassion.

However, without considering this connexion, there is no doubt but that more good than evil, more delight than sorrow, arises from compassion itself; there being so many things which balance the sorrow of it. There is first the relief which the distressed feel from this affection in others towards them. There is likewise the additional misery which they would feel from the reflection that no one commiserated their case. It is indeed true, that any disposition, prevailing beyond a certain degree, becomes somewhat wrong; and we have ways of speaking, which though they do not directly express that excess, yet, always lead our thoughts to it, and give us the notion of it. Thus, when

mention is made of delight in being pitied, this always conveys to our mind the notion of somewhat which is really a weakness: the manner of speaking, I say, implies a certain weakness and feebleness of mind, which is and ought to be disapproved. But men of the greatest fortitude would in distress feel uneasiness, from knowing that no person in the world had any sort of compassion or real concern for them; and in some cases, especially when the temper is enfeebled by sickness or any long and great distress, doubtless, would feel a kind of relief even from the helpless good-will and
c ineffectual assistances of those about them. Over against the sorrow of compassion is likewise to be set a peculiar calm kind of satisfaction, which accompanies it, unless in cases where the distress of another is by some means so brought home to ourselves, as to become in a manner our own; or when from weakness of mind the affection rises too high, which ought to be corrected. This tranquillity or calm satisfaction proceeds, partly from consciousness of a right affection and temper of mind, and partly from a sense of our own freedom from the misery we compassionate. This last may possibly appear to some at first sight faulty; but it really is not so. It is the same with that positive enjoyment, which sudden ease from pain for the present affords, arising from a real sense of misery, joined with a sense of our freedom from it; which in all cases must afford some degree of satisfaction.

d To these things must be added the observation, which respects both the affections we are considering; that they who have got over all fellow-feeling for others, have withal contracted a certain callousness of heart, which renders them insensible to most other satisfactions, but those of the grossest kind.

2 Secondly, Without the exercise of these affections, men would certainly be much more wanting in the offices of charity they owe to each other, and likewise more cruel and injurious, than they are at present.

a The private interest of the individual would not be sufficiently provided for by reasonable and cool self-love alone: therefore the appetites and passions are placed within as a ward and further security, without which it would not be ue care of. It is manifest our life would be neglected,

were it not for the calls of hunger, and thirst, and weariness; notwithstanding that without them reason would assure us, that the recruits of food and sleep are the necessary means of our preservation. It is therefore absurd to imagine, that, without affection, the same reason alone would be more effectual to engage us to perform the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures. One of this make would be as defective, as much wanting, considered with respect to society; as one of the former make would be defective, or wanting, considered as an individual, or in his private capacity. Is it possible any can in earnest think, that a public spirit, *i. e.* a settled reasonable principle of benevolence to mankind, is so prevalent and strong in the species, as that we may venture to throw off the under affections, which are its assistants, carry it forward and mark out particular courses for it; family, friends, neighbourhood, the distressed, our country? The common joys and the common sorrows, which belong to these relations and circumstances, are as plainly useful to society; as the pain and pleasure belonging to hunger, thirst, and weariness are of service to the individual. In defect of that higher principle of reason, compassion is often the only way by which the indigent can have access to us: and therefore to eradicate this, though it is not indeed formally to deny them that assistance which is their due; yet it is to cut them off from that which is too frequently their only way of obtaining it. And as for those who have shut up this door against the complaints of the miserable. and conquered this affection in themselves; even these persons will be under great restraints from the same affection in others. Thus a man who has himself no sense of injustice, cruelty, oppression, will be kept from running the utmost lengths of wickedness, by fear of that detestation, and even resentment of inhumanity, in many particular instances of it, which compassion for the object, towards whom such inhumanity is exercised, excites in the bulk of mankind. And this is frequently the chief danger, and the chief restraint, which tyrants and the great oppressors of the world feel.

In general, experience will show, that as want of natural appetite to food supposes and proceeds from some bodily disease; so the apathy the stoics talk of as much supposes or is accompanied with somewhat amiss in the moral cha-

racter, is that which is the health of the mind. Those who formerly aimed at this upon the foot of philosophy, appear to have had better success in eradicating the affections of tenderness and compassion, than they had with the passions of envy, pride, and resentment; these latter, at best, were but concealed, and that imperfectly too. How far this observation may be extended to such as endeavour to suppress the natural impulses of their affections, in order to form themselves for business and the world, I shall not determine. But there does not appear any capacity or relation to be named, in which men ought to be entirely deaf to the calls of affection, unless the judicial one is to be excepted.

d And as to those who are commonly called the men of pleasure, it is manifest that the reason they set up for hardness of heart, is to avoid being interrupted in their course, by the ruin and misery they are the authors of: neither are persons of this character always the most free from the impotencies of envy and resentment. What may men at last bring themselves to, by suppressing their passions and affections of one kind, and leaving those of the other in their full strength? But surely it might be expected that persons who make pleasure their study and their business, if they understood what they profess, would reflect how many of the entertainments of life, how many of those kinds of amusements which seem peculiar to belong to men of leisure and education, they become insensible to by this acquired hardness of heart.

e I shall close these reflections with barely mentioning the behaviour of that Divine person, who was the example of all perfection in human nature, as represented in the Gospels mourning, and, even in a literal sense, weeping over the distresses of his creatures.

The observation already made, that, of the two affections mentioned in the text, the latter exerts itself much more than the former; that, from the original constitution of human nature we much more generally and sensibly compassionate the distressed, than rejoice with the prosperous, requires to be particularly considered. This observation therefore, with the reflections which arise out of it, and which it leads our thoughts to, shall be the subject of discourse.

Conc.

For the conclusion of this, let me just take notice of the danger of over-great refinements;[4] of going beside or beyond the plain, obvious, first appearances of things, upon the subject of morals and religion. The least observation will show, how little the generality of men are capable of speculations. Therefore morality and religion must be somewhat plain and easy to be understood: it must appeal to what we call common sense, as distinguished from superior capacity and improvement; because it appeals to mankind. Persons of superior capacity and improvement have often fallen into errors, which no one of mere common understanding could. Is it possible that one of this latter character could ever of himself have thought, that there was absolutely no such thing in mankind as affection to the good of others; suppose of parents to their children; or that what he felt upon seeing a friend in distress, was only fear for himself; or, upon supposition of the affections of kindness and compassion, that it was the business of wisdom and virtue to set him about extirpating them as fast as he could? And yet each of these manifest contradictions to Nature has been laid down by men of speculation, as a discovery in moral philosophy; which they, it seems, have found out through all the specious appearances to the contrary. This reflection may be extended further. The extravagancies of enthusiasm and superstition do not at all lie in the road of common sense; and therefore, so far as they are original mistakes, must be owing to going beside or beyond it. Now, since inquiry and examination can relate only to things so obscure and uncertain as to stand in need of it, and to persons who are capable of it; the proper advice to be given to plain honest men, to secure them from the extremes both of superstition and irreligion, is that of the son of Sirach; "In every good work trust thy own soul; for this is the keeping of the commandment."[5]

[[4] The over-refinements referred to in this closing paragraph are chiefly those of Hobbes; but a very little acquaintance with ethical systems will enable the reader to multiply instances of the tendency which Butler condemns: see pp. 349, 389, 390. Examples of over-refinement in religion may be seen on p. 107; and in Sermon xi.]

[5] Ecclus. xxxii. 23.

II

VI.

INTRO. There is a much more exact correspondence between the natural and moral world, than we are apt to take notice of. The inward frame of man does in a peculiar manner answer to the external condition and circumstances of life, in which he is placed. This is a particular instance of that general observation of the son of Sirach:[a] "All things are double one against another, and God hath made nothing imperfect." The several passions and affections in the heart of man, compared with the circumstances of life in which he is placed, afford to such as will attend to them, as certain instances of final causes, as any whatever which are more commonly alleged for such: since those affections lead him to a certain determinate course of action suitable to those circumstances; as (for instance) compassion, to relieve the distressed. And as all observations of final causes, drawn from the principles of action in the heart of man, compared with the condition he is placed in, serve all the good uses which instances of final causes in the material world about us do; and both these are equally proofs of wisdom and design in the Author of Nature; so the former serve to further good purposes; they show us what course of life we are made for, what is our duty, and in a peculiar manner enforce upon us the practice of it.

Suppose we are capable of happiness and of misery in degrees equally intense and extreme, yet, we are capable of the latter for a much longer time beyond all comparison. We see men in the tortures of pain for hours, days, and, excepting the short suspensions of sleep, for months together without intermission; to which no enjoyments of life do, in degree and continuance, bear any sort of proportion. And such is our make and that of the world about us, that anything may become the instrument of pain and sorrow to us. Thus almost any one man is capable of doing mischief to any other, though he may not be capable of doing him good; and if he be capable of doing him some good, he is capable of doing him more evil. And it is, in numberless cases, much more in our power to lessen the miseries of others, than to promote their positive happiness, any otherwise than as the

[a] Ecclus. xlii. 24.

former often includes the latter; ease from misery occasioning for some time the greatest positive enjoyment. This constitution of Nature, namely, that it is so much more in our power to occasion and likewise to lessen misery, than to promote positive happiness, plainly required a particular affection, to hinder us from abusing, and to incline us to make a right use of the former powers, *i. e.* the powers both to occasion and to lessen misery; over and above what was necessary to induce us to make a right use of the latter power, that of promoting positive happiness. The power we have over the misery of our fellow-creatures, to occasion or lessen it, being a more important trust, than the power we have of promoting their positive happiness; the former requires and has a further, an additional security and guard against its being violated, beyond and over and above what the latter has. The social nature of man, and general goodwill to his species, equally prevent him from doing evil, incline him to relieve the distressed, and to promote the positive happiness of his fellow-creatures; but compassion only restrains from the first, and carries him to the second; it hath nothing to do with the third.

The final causes then of compassion are to prevent and to S
relieve misery.

As to the former; this affection may plainly be a restraint a
upon resentment, envy, unreasonable self-love; that is, upon all the principles from which men do evil to one another. Let us instance only in resentment. It seldom happens, in regulated societies, that men have an enemy so entirely in their power, as to be able to satiate their resentment with safety. But if we were to put this case, it is plainly supposable, that a person might bring his enemy into such a condition, as from being the object of anger and rage, to become an object of compassion, even to himself, though the most malicious man in the world; and in this case compassion would stop him, if he could stop with safety, from pursuing his revenge any further. But since nature has placed within us more powerful restraints to prevent mischief, and since the final cause of compassion is much more to relieve misery, let us go on to the consideration of it in this view.

As this world was not intended to be a state of any great b
satisfaction or high enjoyment; so neither was it intended

to be a mere scene of unhappiness and sorrow. Mitigations and reliefs are provided by the merciful Author of Nature for most of the afflictions in human life. There is kind provision made even against our frailties; as we are so constituted that time abundantly abates our sorrows, and begets in us that resignment of temper, which ought to have been produced by a better cause; a due sense of the authority of God, and our state of dependence. This holds in respect to far the greatest part of the evils of life; I suppose, in some degree, as to pain and sickness. Now this part of the constitution or make of man, considered as some relief to misery and not as provision for positive happiness, is, if I may so speak, an instance of Nature's compassion for us, and every natural remedy or relief to misery, may be considered in the same view.

But since, in many cases, it is very much in our power to alleviate the miseries of each other, and benevolence, though natural in man to man, yet is in a very low degree, kept down by interest and competitions, and men, for the most part, are so engaged in the business and pleasures of the world, as to overlook and turn away from objects of misery, which are plainly considered as interruptions to them in their way, as intruders upon their business, their gaiety and mirth; compassion is an advocate within us in their behalf, to gain the unhappy admittance and access, to make their case attended to. If it sometimes serves a contrary purpose, and makes men industriously turn away from the miserable, these are only instances of abuse and perversion, for the end, for which the affection was given us, most certainly is not to make us avoid, but to make us attend to the objects of it. And if men would only resolve to allow thus much to it, let it bring before their view, the view of their mind, the miseries of their fellow-creatures, let it gain for them that their case be considered; I am persuaded it would not fail of gaining more, and that very few real objects of charity would pass unrelieved. Pain and sorrow and misery, have a right to our assistance; compassion puts us in mind of the debt, and that we owe it to ourselves, as well as to the distressed. For, to endeavour to get rid of the sorrow of compassion by turning from the wretched, when yet it is in our power to relieve them, is as unnatural, as to endeavour to

get rid of the pain of hunger by keeping from the sight of food. That we can do one with greater success than we can the other, is no proof that one is less a violation of Nature than the other. Compassion is a call, a demand of Nature, to relieve the unhappy, as hunger is a natural call for food. This affection plainly gives the objects of it an additional claim to relief and mercy, over and above what our fellow-creatures in common have to our goodwill. Liberality and bounty are exceedingly commendable, and a particular distinction in such a world as this, where men set themselves to contract their heart, and close it to all interests but their own. It is by no means to be opposed to mercy, but always accompanies it, the distinction between them is only, that the former leads our thoughts to a more promiscuous and undistinguished distribution of favours, to those who are not, as well as those who are necessitous, whereas the object of compassion is misery. But in the comparison, and where there is not a possibility of both, mercy is to have the preference; the affection of compassion manifestly leads us to this preference. Thus, to relieve the indigent and distressed, to single out the unhappy, from whom can be expected no returns, either of present entertainment or future service, for the objects of our favours, to esteem a man's being friendless as a recommendation, dejection, and incapacity of struggling through the world, as a motive for assisting him; in a word, to consider those circumstances of disadvantage, which are usually thought a sufficient reason for neglect and overlooking a person, as a motive for helping him forward; this is the course of benevolence which compassion marks out and directs us to, this is that humanity, which is so peculiarly becoming our nature and circumstances in this world.

To these considerations, drawn from the nature of man, must be added the reason of the thing itself we are recommending, which accords to and shows the same. For since it is so much more in our power to lessen the misery of our fellow-creatures than to promote their positive happiness, in cases where there is an inconsistency, we shall be likely to do much more good by setting ourselves to mitigate the former, than by endeavouring to promote the latter. Let the competition be between the poor and the rich. It is easy,

you will say, to see which will have the preference. True; but the question is, which ought to have the preference? What proportion is there between the happiness produced by doing a favour to the indigent, and that produced by doing the same favour to one in easy circumstances? It is manifest that the addition of a very large estate to one who before had an affluence, will in many instances yield him less new enjoyment or satisfaction than an ordinary charity would yield to a necessitous person. So that it is not only true, that our nature, *i. e.* the voice of God within us, carries us to the exercise of charity and benevolence in the way of compassion or mercy, preferably to any other way; but we also manifestly discern much more good done by the former, or, if you will allow me the expressions, more misery annihilated, and happiness created. If charity and benevolence, and endeavouring to do good to our fellow-creatures, be any thing, this observation deserves to be most seriously considered by all who have to bestow. And it holds with great exactness, when applied to the several degrees of greater and less indigency throughout the various ranks in human life; the happiness or good produced not being in proportion to what is bestowed, but in proportion to this joined with the need there was of it.

It may perhaps be expected that upon this subject notice should be taken of occasions, circumstances, and characters, which seem at once to call forth affections of different sorts. Thus vice may be thought the object both of pity and indignation; folly, of pity and of laughter. How far this is strictly true I shall not inquire, but only observe upon the appearance, how much more human it is to yield and give scope to affections, which are more directly in favour of and friendly towards our fellow-creatures; and that there is plainly much less danger of being led wrong by these than by the other.

But notwithstanding all that has been said in recommendation of compassion, that it is most amiable, most becoming human nature, and most useful to the world, yet it must be owned that every affection, as distinct from a principle of reason, may rise too high, and be beyond its just proportion. And by means of this one carried too far, a man throughout his life is subject to much more uneasiness than belongs to

his share; and in particular instances, it may be in such a degree as to incapacitate him from assisting the very person who is the object of it. But as there are some who upon principle set up for suppressing this affection itself as weakness, there is also I know not what of fashion on this side, and by some means or other the whole world almost is run into the extremes of insensibility towards the distresses of their fellow-creatures; so that general rules and exhortations must always be on the other side.

And now to go on to the uses we should make of the fore- 4
going reflections, the further ones they lead to, and the
general temper they have a tendency to beget in us. There 5
being that distinct affection implanted in the nature of man,
tending to lessen the miseries of life, that particular provision made for abating its sorrows more than for increasing its positive happiness, as before explained: this may suggest to us what should be our general aim respecting ourselves, in our passage through this world; namely, to endeavour chiefly to escape misery, keep free from uneasiness, pain, and sorrow, or to get relief and mitigation of them; to propose to ourselves peace and tranquillity of mind, rather than pursue after high enjoyments. This is what the constitution of nature, before explained, marks out as the course we should follow, and the end we should aim at. To make pleasure and mirth and jollity our business, and be constantly hurrying about after some gay amusement, some new gratification of sense or appetite, to those who will consider the nature of man and our condition in this world, will appear the most romantic scheme of life that ever entered into thought: and yet how many are there who go on in this course, without learning better from the daily, the hourly disappointments, listlessness, and satiety which accompany this fashionable method of wasting away their days?

The subject we have been insisting upon would lead us 6
into the same kind of reflections by a different connexion. The miseries of life brought home to ourselves by compassion, viewed through this affection considered as the sense by which they are perceived, would beget in us that moderation, humility, and soberness of mind, which has been now recommended, and which peculiarly belongs to a season of recollection, the only purpose of which is to bring us to a

just sense of things, to recover us out of that forgetfulness of ourselves, and our true state, which it is manifest far the greatest part of men pass their whole life in. Upon this account Solomon says, that "it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting;" *i. e.* it is more to a man's advantage to turn his eyes towards objects of distress, to recall sometimes to his remembrance the occasions of sorrow, than to pass all his days in thoughtless mirth and gaiety. And he represents the wise as choosing to frequent the former of these places, to be sure not for its own sake, but because "by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." Every one observes, how temperate and reasonable men are when humbled and brought low by afflictions, in comparison of what they are in high prosperity. By this voluntary resort to the house of mourning, which is here recommended, we might learn all those useful instructions which calamities teach, without undergoing them ourselves; and grow wiser and better at a more easy rate than men commonly do. The objects themselves, which in that place of sorrow lie before our view, naturally give us a seriousness and attention, check that wantonness which is the growth of prosperity and ease, and lead us to reflect upon the deficiencies of human life itself, that every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. This would correct the florid and gaudy prospects and expectations which we are too apt to indulge, teach us to lower our notions of happiness and enjoyment, bring them down to the reality of things, to what is attainable, to what the frailty of our condition will admit of, which for any continuance is only tranquillity, ease, and moderate satisfactions. Thus we might at once become proof against the temptations with which the whole world almost is carried away; since it is plain that not only what is called a life of pleasure, but also vicious pursuits in general, aim at somewhat besides and beyond these moderate satisfactions.

And as to that obstinacy and wilfulness, which render men so insensible to the motives of religion, this right sense of ourselves and of the world about us would bend the stubborn mind, soften the heart, and make it more apt to receive impressions; and this is the proper temper in which to call our ways to remembrance, to review and set home upon

ourselves the miscarriages of our past life. In such a compliant state of mind reason and conscience will have a fair hearing, which is the preparation for, or rather the beginning of that repentance, the outward show of which we all put on at this season.

Lastly, the various miseries of life which lie before us wherever we turn our eyes, the frailty of this mortal state we are passing through, may put us in mind that the present world is not our home, that we are merely strangers and travellers in it, as all our fathers were; it is, therefore, to be considered as a foreign country, in which our poverty and wants, and the insufficient supplies of them, were designed to turn our views to that higher and better state we are heirs to; a state where will be no follies to be overlooked, no miseries to be pitied, no wants to be relieved; where the affection we have been now treating of will happily be lost, as there will be no objects to exercise it upon, for "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

SERMON VII.

UPON THE CHARACTER OF BALAAM.[1]

NUMBERS xxiii. 10.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.

THESE words, taken alone, and without respect to him who spoke them, lead our thoughts immediately to the different ends of good and bad men; for though the comparison is not expressed, yet it is manifestly implied, as is also the

[[1] Sermons vii. and x., "Upon the Character of Balaam," and "Upon Self-deceit," though on practical subjects, have a close connexion with the other ethical portions of this volume. They illustrate several parts of the 'Analogy,' and some of Butler's views on ethics and on human nature.]

preference of one of these characters to the other in that last circumstance, death: and, since dying the death of the righteous or of the wicked necessarily implies men's being righteous or wicked, *i.e.* having lived righteously or wickedly, a comparison of them in their lives also might come into consideration from such a single view of the words themselves; but my present design is to consider them with a particular reference or respect to him who spoke them, which reference, if you please to attend, you will see; and if what shall be offered to your consideration at this time be thought a discourse upon the whole history of this man, rather than upon the particular words I have read, this is of no consequence; it is sufficient if it afford reflection of use and service to ourselves.

But in order to avoid cavils respecting this remarkable relation in Scripture, either that part of it which you have heard in the first lesson for the day, or any other, let me just observe that, as this is not a place for answering them, so they no way affect the following discourse, since the character there given is plainly a real one in life, and such as there are parallels to.

The occasion of Balaam's coming out of his own country into the land of Moab, where he pronounced this solemn prayer or wish, he himself relates in the first parable or prophetic speech, of which it is the conclusion, in which is a custom referred to proper to be taken notice of, that of devoting enemies to destruction before the entrance upon a war with them. This custom appears to have prevailed over a great part of the world, for we find it amongst the most distant nations. The Romans had public officers, to whom it belonged as a stated part of their office, but there was somewhat more particular in the case now before us, Balaam being looked upon as an extraordinary person, whose blessing or curse was thought to be always effectual.

In order to engage the reader's attention to this passage, the sacred historian has enumerated the preparatory circumstances, which are these. Balaam requires the king of Moab to build him seven altars, and to prepare him the same number of oxen and of rams. The sacrifice being over, he retires alone to a solitude sacred to these occasions, there to wait the Divine inspiration or answer, for which the fore-

going rites were the preparation.[2] And God met Balaam and put a word in his mouth, upon receiving which he returns back to the altars, where was the king, who had all this while attended the sacrifice as appointed, he and all the princes of Moab standing, big with expectation of the prophet's reply.[3] "And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

It is necessary, as you will see in the progress of this discourse, particularly to observe what he understood by righteous, and he himself is introduced in the book of Micah[4] explaining it, if by righteous is meant good, as to be sure it is. "O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal." From the mention of Shittim it is manifest that it is this very story which is here referred to, though another part of it, the account of which is not now extant, as there are many quotations in Scripture out of books which are not come down to us. Remember what Balaam answered, "that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord," *i. e.* the righteousness which God will accept. Balak demands, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Balaam answers him, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Here is a good man expressly characterized as distinct from a dishonest and a superstitious man.

[2] Ver. 4, 5. [3] Ver. 6. [4] Micah vi.

ceeded; the people sin against God, and thus the prophet's counsel brought on that destruction, which he could by no means be prevailed upon to assist with the religious ceremony of execration which the king of Moab thought would itself have effected it. Their crime and punishment are related in Deuteronomy[7] and Numbers.[8] And from the relation repeated in Numbers,[9] it appears that Balaam was the contriver of the whole matter. It is also ascribed to him in the Revelation,[10] where he is said to have taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel.

This was the man, this Balaam, I say, was the man who desired to die the death of the righteous, and that his last end might be like his; and this was the state of his mind when he pronounced these words.

So that the object we have now before us is the most astonishing in the world; a very wicked man, under a deep sense of God and religion, persisting still in his wickedness, and preferring the wages of unrighteousness, even when he had before him a lively view of death, and that approaching period of his days, which should deprive him of all those advantages for which he was prostituting himself; and likewise a prospect, whether certain or uncertain, of a future state of retribution. All this joined with an explicit ardent wish, that, when he was to leave this world, he might be in the condition of a righteous man. Good God, what inconsistency, what perplexity is here! With what different views of things, with what contradictory principles of action must such a mind be torn and distracted! It was not unthinking carelessness, by which he ran on headlong in vice and folly, without ever making a stand to ask himself what he was doing; no, he acted upon the cool motives of interest and advantage. Neither was he totally hard and callous to impressions of religion, what we call abandoned, for he absolutely denied to curse Israel. When reason assumes her place, when convinced of his duty, when he owns and feels, and is actually under the influence of the Divine authority, whilst he is carrying on his views to the grave, the end of all temporal greatness; under this sense of things, with the better character and more desirable state, present — full

[7] Chap. iv. [8] Chap. xxv [9] Chap. xxxi. [10] Chap. ii.

before him—in his thoughts, in his wishes, voluntarily to choose the worse. What fatality is here! or how, otherwise, can such a character be explained? And yet, strange as it may appear, it is not altogether an uncommon one; nay, with some small alterations, and put a little lower, it is applicable to a very considerable part of the world. For if the reasonable choice be seen and acknowledged, and yet men make the unreasonable one, is not this the same contradiction, that very inconsistency, which appeared so unaccountable?

To give some little opening to such characters and behaviour, it is to be observed, in general, that there is no account to be given in the way of reason, of men's so strong attachments to the present world; our hopes and fears and pursuits are, in degrees, beyond all proportion to the known value of the things they respect. This may be said without taking into consideration religion and a future state, and when these are considered, the disproportion is infinitely heightened. Now when men go against their reason, and contradict a more important interest at a distance, for one nearer, though of less consideration; if this be the whole of the case, all that can be said is, that strong passions, some kind of brute force within, prevails over the principle of rationality. However, if this be with a clear, full, and distinct view of the truth of things, then it is doing the utmost violence to themselves, acting in the most palpable contradiction to their very nature.[11] But if there be any such thing in mankind, as putting half deceits upon themselves; which there plainly is, either by avoiding reflection, or (if they do reflect) by religious equivocation, subterfuges, and palliating matters to themselves, by these means, conscience may be laid asleep, and they may go on in a course of wickedness with less disturbance. All the various turns, doubles, and intricacies in a dishonest heart, cannot be unfolded or laid open, but that there is somewhat of that kind is manifest, be it to be called self-deceit or by any other name. Balaam had before his eyes the authority of God, absolutely forbidding him what he, for the sake of a reward, had the strongest inclination to; he was likewise in a state of mind sober enough to consider death and his

[11] [See 'Wayland's Sermons;' Sermon on the Fall.]

last end; by these considerations he was restrained, first from going to the king of Moab, and after he did go, from cursing Israel. But notwithstanding this, there was great wickedness in his heart. He could not forego the rewards of unrighteousness; he therefore first seeks for indulgences, and when these could not be obtained, he sins against the whole meaning, end, and design of the prohibition, which no consideration in the world could prevail with him to go against the letter of. And surely that impious counsel, he gave to Balak against the children of Israel, was, considered in itself, a greater piece of wickedness, than if he had cursed them in words.

If it be inquired what his situation, his hopes and fears were, in respect to this his wish; the answer must be, that consciousness of the wickedness of his heart must necessarily have destroyed all settled hopes of dying the death of the righteous; he could have no calm satisfaction in this view of his last end. Yet, on the other hand, it is possible that those partial regards to his duty, now mentioned, might keep him from perfect despair.

Upon the whole, it is manifest that Balaam had the most just and true notions of God and religion, as appears, partly from the original story itself, and more plainly from the passage in Micah, where he explains religion to consist in real virtue and real piety, expressly distinguished from superstition, and in terms which most strongly exclude dishonesty and falseness of heart. Yet you see his behaviour: he seeks indulgences for plain wickedness, which not being able to obtain, he glosses over that same wickedness, dresses it up in a new form, in order to make it pass off more easily with himself; that is, he deliberately contrives to deceive and impose upon himself, in a matter which he knew to be of the utmost importance.

To bring these observations home to ourselves. It is too evident that many persons allow themselves in very unjustifiable courses, who yet make great pretences to religion; not to deceive the world, none can be so weak as to think this will pass in our age, but from principles, hopes, and fears, respecting God and a future state; and go on thus with a sort of tranquillity and quiet of mind. This cannot be upon a thorough consideration and full resolution, that

the pleasures and advantages they propose are to be pursued at all hazards against reason, against the law of God, and though everlasting destruction is to be the consequence. This would be doing too great violence upon themselves. No, they are for making a composition with the Almighty. These of his commands they will obey: but as to others—why they will make all the atonements in their power; the ambitious, the covetous, the dissolute man, each in a way which shall not contradict his respective pursuit. Indulgences before, which was Balaam's first attempt, though he was not so successful in it as to deceive himself, or atonements afterwards, are all the same. And here perhaps come in faint hopes that they may, and half-resolves that they will, one time or other, make a change.

Besides these, there are also persons, who from a more just way of considering things, see the infinite absurdity of this, of substituting sacrifice instead of obedience; there are persons far enough from superstition, and not without some real sense of God and religion upon their minds, who yet are guilty of most unjustifiable practices, and go on with great coolness and command over themselves. The same dishonesty and unsoundness of heart discovers itself in these another way. In all common ordinary cases we see intuitively at first view what is our duty, what is the honest part. This is the ground of the observation, that the first thought is often the best. In these cases doubt and deliberation is itself dishonesty; as it was in Balaam upon the second message. That which is called considering what is our duty in a particular case, is very often nothing but endeavouring to explain it away. Thus those courses, which, if men would fairly attend to the dictates of their own consciences, they would see to be corruption, excess, oppression, uncharitableness; these are refined upon—things were so and so circumstantiated—great difficulties are raised about fixing bounds and degrees: and thus every moral obligation whatever may be evaded. Here is scope, I say, for an unfair mind to explain away every moral obligation to itself.[12] Whether men reflect again upon this internal management and artifice, and how explicit they are with themselves, is another question. There are many operations of the mind, many things pass within,

[12] ['Analogy,' pt. ii. chap. vi. p. 245.]

which we never reflect upon again; which a bystander, from having frequent opportunities of observing us and our conduct, may make shrewd guesses at.

That great numbers are in this way of deceiving themselves is certain. There is scarce a man in the world, who has entirely got over all regards, hopes and fears, concerning God and a future state; and these apprehensions in the generality, bad as we are, prevail in considerable degrees: yet men will and can be wicked with calmness and thought; we see they are. There must therefore be some method of making it sit a little easy upon their minds; which, in the superstitious, is those indulgences and atonements before-mentioned, and this self-deceit of another kind in persons of another character. And both these proceed from a certain unfairness of mind, a peculiar inward dishonesty; the direct contrary to that simplicity which our Saviour recommends, under the notion of becoming little children, as a necessary qualification for our entering into the kingdom of heaven.

But to conclude: how much soever men differ in the course of life they prefer, and in their ways of palliating and excusing their vices to themselves; yet all agree in the one thing, desiring to die the death of the righteous. This is surely remarkable. The observation may be extended further, and put thus: even without determining what that is which we call guilt or innocence, there is no man but would choose, after having had the pleasure or advantage of a vicious action, to be free of the guilt of it, to be in the state of an innocent man. This shows at least the disturbance, and implicit dissatisfaction in vice. If we inquire into the grounds of it, we shall find it proceeds partly from an immediate sense of having done evil;[13] and partly from an apprehension, that this inward sense shall one time or another be seconded by a higher judgment, upon which our whole being depends. Now to suspend and drown this sense, and these apprehensions, be it by the hurry of business or of pleasure, or by superstition, or moral equivocations, this is in a manner one and the same, and makes no alteration at all in the nature of our case. Things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be: why then should we desire to be deceived? As we are

[13] ['Analogy,' pt. i. chap. iii. p. 61.]

reasonable creatures, and have any regard to ourselves, we ought to lay these things plainly and honestly before our mind, and upon this, act as you please, as you think most fit; make that choice and prefer that course of life which you can justify to yourself, and which sits most easy upon your own mind. It will immediately appear, that vice cannot be the happiness, but must upon the whole be the misery, of such a creature as man; a moral, an accountable agent. Superstitious observances, self-deceit though of a more refined sort, will not in reality at all mend matters with us. And the result of the whole can be nothing else, but that with simplicity and fairness "we keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right; for this alone shall bring a man peace at the last."[14]

SERMON VIII.

UPON RESENTMENT.

[viii. On the use and abuse of resentment.

INTRO. Man's nature is to be judged, not as to whether it is best in the abstract, but on a comparison with his circumstances.

Here, we have to consider the emotion of resentment itself, and the end for which it was given. A common answer erroneous.

1 The nature of the emotion.

It is of two kinds—sudden and deliberate.

a *Sudden* anger is an instinct, excited by violence or harm, not necessarily a *wrong*, and the end of this passion is the resistance or prevention of violence.

b *Deliberate* anger, or resentment, is a passion, excited by *wrong* or injury undeserved. Hence called indignation,

[14] [As announcements of the *gospel*, several of the statements of this sermon are defective: "Peace at the last" is indeed the portion of him who "*keeps* innocency;" but with our race, who have *lost* innocency, the practical question comes to be, how is peace to be regained—and holiness. Both, the gospel teaches, are the fruits of faith: see p. 222.]

which (1) is not malice, and (2) is stronger the more nearly the injury affects ourselves. (3) The sense of wrong is essential to it, as is plain from the circumstances which aggravate the feeling.

2 The end for which the emotion of resentment is implanted: to prevent or remedy injury.

Summary.

3 The abuses of the emotion of resentment.

a Abuses of *sudden* anger: passion; peevishness.

b Abuses of *deliberate* anger: resentment against such as *innocently* injure us; obstinacy in resisting evidence of innocence.

Though liable to abuse, the emotion is important, as a balance against the weakness of pity, and in punishing crime.

CONCL. Hence fresh proofs (1) of the reality of virtue, which has certain emotions on its side, and (2) of the wisdom and goodness of God, who makes an instance of them, even the emotion of resentment.]

MATTHEW v. 43, 44.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

INTRO. SINCE perfect goodness in the Deity is the principle, from whence the universe was brought into being and by which it is preserved: and since general benevolence is the great law of the whole moral creation: it is a question which immediately occurs, why had man implanted in him a principle, which appears the direct contrary to benevolence? Now the foot upon which inquiries of this kind should be treated is this; to take human nature as it is, and the circumstances in which it is placed as they are; and then consider the correspondence between that nature and those circumstances, or what course of action and behaviour, respecting those circumstances, any particular affection or passion leads us to. This I mention to distinguish the matter now before us from disquisitions of quite another kind; namely, why are we not made more perfect creatures,

or placed in better circumstances?[1] These being questions which we have not, that I know of, anything at all to do with. God Almighty undoubtedly foresaw the disorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this state of things. If upon this we set ourselves to search and examine why he did not prevent them; we shall, I am afraid, be in danger of running into somewhat worse than impertinent curiosity. But upon this to examine, how far the nature which he hath given us hath a respect to those circumstances, such as they are; how far it leads us to act a proper part in them; plainly belongs to us: and such inquiries are in many ways of excellent use. Thus the thing to be considered is, not, why we were not made of such a nature, and placed in such circumstances, as to have no need of so harsh and turbulent a passion as resentment but, taking our nature and condition as being what they are, why or for what end such a passion was given us: and this chiefly in order to show, what are the abuses of it.

The persons who laid down for a rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy," made short work with this matter. They did not, it seems, perceive anything to be disapproved in hatred, more than in goodwill: and, according to their system of morals, our enemy was the proper natural object of one of these passions, as our neighbour was of the other of them. This was all they had to say, and all they thought needful to be said, upon the subject. But this cannot be satisfactory: because hatred, malice, and revenge, are directly contrary to the religion we profess, and to the nature and reason of the thing itself. Therefore, since no passion God hath endued us with can be in itself evil; and yet since men frequently indulge a passion in such ways and degrees that at length it becomes quite another thing from what it was originally in our nature; and those vices of malice and revenge in particular take their occasion from the natural passion of resentment: it will be needful to trace this up to its original, that we may see, what it is in itself, as placed in our nature by its Author; from which it will plainly appear, for what ends it was placed there. And when we know what the passion is in itself, and the ends of it, we shall easily see, what are the abuses of it, in

[1] [See 'Analogy,' pt. i. chap. v. p. 89.]

which malice and revenge consist and which are so strongly forbidden in the text, by the direct contrary being commanded.

1 Resentment is of two kinds: hasty and sudden, or settled and deliberate.[2] The former is called anger, and often passion; which, though a general word, is frequently appropriated and confined to the particular feeling, sudden anger, as distinct from deliberate resentment, malice and revenge. In all these words is usually implied somewhat vicious; somewhat unreasonable as to the occasion of the passion, or immoderate as to the degree or duration of it. But that the natural passion itself is indifferent, St. Paul has asserted in that precept, "Be ye angry, and sin not:"[3] which though it is by no means to be understood as an encouragement to indulge ourselves in anger, the sense being certainly this, though ye be angry, sin not; yet here is evidently a distinction made, between anger and sin: between the natural passion and sinful anger.

2 Sudden anger upon certain occasions is mere instinct; as merely so, as the disposition to close our eyes upon the apprehension of somewhat falling into them; and no more necessarily implies any degree of reason. I say, necessarily, for to be sure hasty, as well as deliberate, anger may be occasioned by injury or contempt; in which cases reason suggests to our thoughts that injury and contempt, which is the occasion of the passion: but I am speaking of the former only so far as it is to be distinguished from the latter. The only way, in which our reason and understanding can raise anger, is by representing to our mind injustice or injury of some kind or other. Now momentary anger is

[2] ["One point in Butler's account of resentment has been admired as happy and novel: I mean the distinction between sudden anger and settled resentment. The distinction is of this kind: the former does not imply that we have wrong inflicted on us; the latter does. The former flashes up before we have time to reflect, and resists all violence and harm; the latter glows with a permanent heat against injury and wrong. The former is an instinct implanted for preservation; the latter is a moral sentiment given for the repression of injustice. The former belongs to animals; the latter is peculiar to man.' — *Whewell.*]

[3] Ephes. iv. 26.

frequently raised, not only without any real, but without any apparent reason; that is, without any appearance of injury, as distinct from hurt or pain. It cannot, I suppose, be thought that this passion, in infants; in the lower species of animals; and, which is often seen, in men towards them: it cannot, I say, be imagined that these instances of this passion are the effect of reason: no, they are occasioned by mere sensation and feeling. It is opposition, sudden hurt, violence, which naturally excites the passion: and the real demerit or fault of him who offers that violence, or is the cause of that opposition or hurt, does not in many cases so much as come into thought.

The reason and end for which man was made thus liable to this passion, is, that he might be better qualified to prevent, and likewise (or perhaps chiefly) to resist and defeat, sudden force, violence, and opposition, considered merely as such, and without regard to the fault or demerit of him who is the author of them. Yet, since violence may be considered in this other and further view, as implying fault, and since injury, as distinct from harm, may raise sudden anger; sudden anger may likewise accidentally serve to prevent, or remedy, such fault and injury. But, considered as distinct from settled anger, it stands in our nature for self-defence, and not for the administration of justice. There are plainly cases, and in the uncultivated parts of the world, and, where regular governments are not formed, they frequently happen, in which there is no time for consideration, and yet to be passive is certain destruction; in which, sudden resistance is the only security.

But from this deliberate anger or resentment is essentially b distinguished, as the latter is not naturally excited by, or intended to prevent mere harm, without appearance of wrong or injustice. Now, in order to see, as exactly as we can, what is the natural object and occasion of such resentment, let us reflect upon the manner in which we are touched with reading, suppose, a feigned story of baseness and villany, properly worked up to move our passions. This immediately raises indignation, somewhat of a desire that it should be punished, and though the designed injury be prevented, yet that it was designed is sufficient to raise this inward feeling. Suppose the story true, this inward

feeling would be as natural and as just, and one may venture to affirm that there is scarce a man in the world but would have it upon some occasions. It seems in us plainly connected with a sense of virtue and vice, of moral good and evil. Suppose, further, we know both the person who did and who suffered the injury, neither would this make any alteration, only that it would probably affect us more. The
1 indignation raised by cruelty and injustice, and the desire of having it punished, which persons unconcerned would feel, is by no means malice; no, it is resentment against vice and wickedness; it is one of the common bonds by which society is held together, a fellow-feeling which each individual has in behalf of the whole species as well as of himself, and it does not appear that this, generally speaking, is at all too high amongst mankind. Suppose now the injury I have been speaking of to be done against ourselves, or those whom
2 we consider as ourselves, it is plain the way in which we should be affected would be exactly the same in kind, but it would certainly be in a higher degree and less transient, because a sense of our own happiness and misery is most intimately and always present to us, and from the very constitution of our nature we cannot but have a greater sensibility to, and be more deeply interested in, what concerns ourselves; and this seems to be the whole of this passion, which is, properly speaking, natural to mankind, namely, a resentment against injury and wickedness in general, and in a higher degree when towards ourselves, in proportion to the greater regard which men naturally have for themselves than for others. From hence it appears that it is not natural, but moral evil; it is not suffering, but injury which raises that anger or resentment which is of any continuance. The natural object of it is not one who appears to the suffering person to have been only the innocent occasion of his pain or loss, but one who has been, in a moral
3 sense, injurious either to ourselves or others. This is abundantly confirmed by observing what it is which heightens or lessens resentment, namely, the same which aggravates or lessens the fault, friendship and former obligations on one hand, or inadvertency, strong temptations, and mistake on the other. All this is so much understood by mankind, how little soever it be reflected upon, that a person would be

reckoned quite distracted who should coolly resent a harm which had not to himself the appearance of injury or wrong. Men do indeed resent what is occasioned through carelessness, but then they expect observance as their due, and so that carelessness is considered as faulty. It is likewise true that they resent more strongly an injury done than one which, though designed, was prevented, in cases where the guilt is perhaps the same; the reason, however, is not that bare pain or loss raises resentment, but that it gives a new, and, as I may speak, additional sense of the injury or injustice. According to the natural course of the passions, the degrees of resentment are in proportion, not only to the degree of design and deliberation in the injurious person, but in proportion to this, joined with the degree of the evil designed or premeditated, since this likewise comes in to make the injustice greater or less; and the evil or harm will appear greater when they feel it than when they only reflect upon it, so therefore will the injury, and consequently the resentment will be greater.

The natural object or occasion of settled resentment then 2
being injury, as distinct from pain or loss, it is easy to see that to prevent and to remedy such injury, and the miseries arising from it, is the end for which this passion was implanted in man. It is to be considered as a weapon, put into our hands by Nature, against injury, injustice, and cruelty; how it may be innocently employed and made use of shall presently be mentioned.

The account which has been now given of this passion, is, Summ.
in brief, that sudden anger is raised by, and was chiefly intended to prevent or remedy, mere harm distinct from injury;[4] but that it may be raised by injury, and may serve to prevent or to remedy it, and then the occasions and effects of it are the same with the occasions and effects of deliberate anger, but they are essentially distinguished in this, that the latter is never occasioned by harm distinct from injury, and its natural proper end is to remedy or prevent only that harm which implies, or is supposed to

[4] [This distinction between "harm" and "injury"—the latter involving a censure on an act as having a bad moral quality—is recognised by most moralists.—Whewell's 'Elements of Morality,' i, p. 41; Wayland's 'Moral Science, p. 31.]

imply, injury or moral wrong. Every one sees that these observations do not relate to those who have habitually suppressed the course of their passions and affections out of regard either to interest or virtue, or who, from habits of vice and folly, have changed their nature; but I suppose there can be no doubt but this now described is the general course of resentment, considered as a natural passion, neither increased by indulgence nor corrected by virtue, nor prevailed over by other passions or particular habits of life.

3 As to the abuses of anger, which it is to be observed may
a be in all different degrees, the first which occurs is what is commonly called passion, to which some men are liable, in the same way as others are to the epilepsy, or any sudden particular disorder. This distemper of the mind seizes them upon the least occasion in the world, and perpetually without any real reason at all, and by means of it they are plainly every day, every waking hour of their lives, liable and in danger of running into the most extravagant outrages. Of a less boisterous, but not of a less innocent kind, is peevishness, which I mention with pity, with real pity, to the unhappy creatures who, from their inferior station, or other circumstances and relations, are obliged to be in the way of, and to serve for a supply to it. Both these, for aught, that I can see, are one and the same principle, but as it takes root in minds of different makes, it appears differently, and so is come to be distinguished by different names. That which in a more feeble temper is peevishness, and languidly discharges itself upon everything which comes in its way, the same principle, in a temper of greater force and stronger passions, becomes rage and fury. In one the humour discharges itself at once, in the other it is continually discharging. This is the account of passion and peevishness, as distinct from each other, and appearing in different persons; it is no objection against the truth of it that they are both to be seen sometimes in one and the same person.

b With respect to deliberate resentment, the chief instances of abuse are, when from partiality to ourselves we imagine an injury done us when there is none; when this partiality represents it to us greater than it really is; when we fall into that extravagant and monstrous kind of resentment

towards one who has innocently been the occasion of evil to us, that is, resentment upon account of pain or inconvenience without injury, which is the same absurdity as settled anger at a thing that is inanimate; when the indignation against injury and injustice rises too high, and is beyond proportion to the particular ill action it is exercised upon; or, lastly, when pain or harm of any kind is inflicted merely in consequence of, and to gratify that resentment, though naturally raised.

It would be endless to descend into and explain all the peculiarities of perverseness and wayward humour which might be traced up to this passion; but there is one thing which so generally belongs to and accompanies all excess and abuse of it, as to require being mentioned—a certain determination and resolute bent of mind not to be convinced or set right, though it be ever so plain that there is no reason for the displeasure, that it was raised merely by error or misunderstanding. In this there is doubtless a great mixture of pride, but there is somewhat more, which I cannot otherwise express than that resentment has taken possession of the temper and of the mind and will not quit its hold. It would be too minute to inquire whether this be anything more than bare obstinacy; it is sufficient to observe that it, in a very particular manner and degree, belongs to the abuses of this passion.

But notwithstanding all these abuses, "is not just indignation against cruelty and wrong one of the instruments of death which the Author of our nature hath provided? Are not cruelty, injustice, and wrong the natural objects of that indignation? Surely then it may one way or other be innocently employed against them." True; since, therefore, it is necessary for the very subsistence of the world that injury, injustice, and cruelty should be punished, and since compassion, which is so natural to mankind, would render that execution of justice exceedingly difficult and uneasy, indignation against vice and wickedness is, and may be allowed to be, a balance to that weakness of pity, and also to anything else which would prevent the necessary methods of severity. Those who have never thought upon those subjects may perhaps not see the weight of this, but let us suppose a person guilty of murder or any other

action of cruelty, and that mankind had naturally no indignation against such wickedness and the authors of it, but that everybody was affected towards such a criminal in the same way as towards an innocent man, compassion, amongst other things, would render the execution of justice exceedingly painful and difficult, and would often quite prevent it, and notwithstanding that the principle of benevolence is denied by some, and is really in a very low degree, that men are in great measure insensible to the happiness of their fellow-creatures, yet they are not insensible to their misery, but are very strongly moved with it, insomuch that there plainly is occasion for that feeling which is raised by guilt and demerit as a balance to that of compassion. Thus much may, I think, justly be allowed to resentment in the strictest way of moral consideration.

The good influence which this passion has in fact upon the affairs of the world is obvious to every one's notice. Men are plainly restrained from injuring their fellow-creatures by fear of their resentment, and it is very happy that they are so, when they would not be restrained by a principle of virtue: and after an injury is done, and there is a necessity that the offender should be brought to justice, the cool consideration of reason that the security and peace of society requires examples of justice should be made, might indeed be sufficient to procure laws to be enacted and sentence passed; but is it that cool reflection in the injured person which, for the most part, brings the offended to justice? or is it not resentment and indignation against the injury and the author of it? I am afraid there is no doubt which is commonly the case. This, however, is to be considered as a good effect, notwithstanding it were much to be wished that men would act from a better principle, reason and cool reflection.

ONCL. The account now given of the passion of resentment, as distinct from all the abuses of it, may suggest to our thoughts the following reflections.

1 First. That vice is indeed of ill-desert, and must finally be punished. Why should men dispute concerning the reality of virtue, and whether it be founded in the nature of things which yet surely is not matter of question; but why should this, I say, be disputed, when every man carries about him

this passion, which affords him demonstration that the rules of justice and equity are to be the guide of his actions? For every man naturally feels an indignation upon seeing instances of villany and baseness, and therefore cannot commit the same without being self-condemned.

Secondly. That we should learn to be cautious lest we charge God foolishly, by ascribing that to him, or the nature he has given us, which is owing wholly to our own abuse of it. Men may speak of the degeneracy and corruption of the world, according to the experience they have had of it, but human nature, considered as the Divine workmanship, should methinks be treated as sacred; for in the image of God made he man. That passion, from whence men take occasion to run into the dreadful vices of malice and revenge; even that passion, as implanted in our nature by God, is not only innocent but a generous movement of mind.[5] It is in itself, and in its original, no more than indignation against injury and wickedness; that which is the only deformity in the creation, and the only reasonable object of abhorrence and dislike. How manifold evidence have we of the Divine wisdom and goodness, when even pain in the natural world, and the passion we have been now considering in the moral, come out instances of it!

SERMON IX.

UPON FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

[On the limits of resentment: or on the forgiveness of injuries.

INTRO. There are several affections in man appropriate to a state of disorder and imperfection: Resentment is one of these, and natural. The duty of forgiveness does not forbid resentment, but the excess or abuse of it.

[Resentment in man answers, it will be noticed, to "wrath" in God. The latter is not passionateness, or implacableness, as some have supposed; it is the *moral sentiment* with which a holy being cannot but regard iniquity.]

1 Such resentment in excess (retaliation or revenge) is wrong; for

a (First) anger produces anger; revenge, malice, and that without limit: an aggravation of misery.

b (Secondly) such resentment is a painful remedy to him who suffers from it, and, if not a remedy, it becomes an unmixed evil: The gratification of this passion is never innocent, except when necessary.

Proved from two cases, 1, 2.

2 Love to our enemies is a duty; for it is part of the law of general benevolence, which however admits resentment, though not the abuses of it.

This is clear from the following considerations:

a Resentment is consistent with goodwill.

b Which goodwill is not destroyed by any vice in the object of it; not even when vice exists in the highest degree; nor when we ourselves suffer by it. So all allow who are not swayed by self-partiality.

Therefore, to love our enemies is not rant, unless benevolence is so; but is as reasonable as the opposite is mischievous.

3 Reflections adapted to beget and strengthen the temper approved above.

a Self-love is apt to magnify things amiss in others and lessen things amiss in ourselves: Beware of yielding to it.

b So is anger.

c Moderation, therefore, is only common sense, trying to ascertain the truth; and is perfectly reasonable.

d The origin of wrong done us is not generally malice, but some passion in itself, and within proper limits allowable.

e The object of our resentment is himself a sufferer, and therefore, a fit object of compassion.

f We ourselves need forgiveness; and a forgiving disposition is essential to it.]

MATTHEW v. 43, 44.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

INTRO. As God Almighty foresaw the irregularities and disorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this state of

things, he hath graciously made some provision against them, by giving us several passions and affections, which arise from or whose objects are those disorders. Of this sort are fear, resentment, compassion, and others ; of which there could be no occasion or use in a perfect state; but in the present we should be exposed to greater inconveniences without them, though there are very considerable ones, which they themselves are the occasions of. They are incumbrances indeed, but such as we are obliged to carry about with us through this various journey of life; some of them as a guard against the violent assaults of others, and in our own defence; some in behalf of others; and all of them to put us upon and help to carry us through a course of behaviour suitable to our condition, in default of that perfection of wisdom and virtue which would be in all respects our better security.

The passion of anger or resentment hath already been largely treated of. It hath been shown that mankind naturally feel some emotion of mind against injury and injustice, whoever are the sufferers by it, and even though the injurious design be prevented from taking effect. Let this be called anger, indignation, resentment, or by whatever name any one shall choose, the thing itself is understood and is plainly natural. It has likewise been observed that this natural indignation is generally moderate and low enough in mankind, in each particular man, when the injury which excites it doth not affect himself, or one whom he considers as himself. Therefore the precepts to forgive, and to love our enemies, do not relate to that general indignation against injury and the authors of it, but to this feeling or resentment when raised by private or personal injury: but no man could be thought in earnest who should assert that, though indignation against injury when others are the sufferers, is innocent and just, yet the same indignation against it, when we ourselves are the sufferers, becomes faulty and blamable. These precepts therefore cannot be understood to forbid this in the latter case, more than in the former: nay, they cannot be understood to forbid this feeling in the latter case, though raised to a higher degree than in the former; because, as was also observed further, from the very constitution of our nature, we cannot but have a greater sensibility to what

concerns ourselves: therefore the precepts in the text, and others of the like import with them, must be understood to forbid only the excess and abuse of this natural feeling, in cases of personal and private injury: the chief instances of which excess and abuse have likewise been already remarked, and all of them, excepting that of retaliation, do so plainly in the very terms express somewhat unreasonable, disproportionate, and absurd, as to admit of no pretence or shadow of justification.

But since custom and false honour are on the side of retaliation and revenge when the resentment is natural and just, and reasons are sometimes offered in justification of revenge in these cases; and since love of our enemies is thought too hard a saying to be obeyed; I will show the absolute unlawfulness of the former, the obligations we are under to the latter; and then proceed to some reflections, which may have a more direct and immediate tendency to beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us.

In showing the unlawfulness of revenge, it is not my present design to examine what is alleged in favour of it, from the tyranny of custom and false honour, but only to consider the nature and reason of the thing itself, which ought to have prevented and ought now to extirpate everything of that kind.

First. Let us begin with the supposition of that being innocent, which is pleaded for, and which shall be shown to be altogether vicious, the supposition that we were allowed to render evil for evil, and see what would be the consequence. Malice or resentment towards any man hath plainly a tendency to beget the same passion in him who is the object of it, and this again increases it in the other. It is of the very nature of this vice to propagate itself, not only by way of example, which it does in common with other vices, but in a peculiar way of its own; for resentment itself, as well as what is done in consequence of it, is the object of resentment: hence it comes to pass that the first offence, even when so slight as presently to be dropped and forgotten, becomes the occasion of entering into a long intercourse of ill offices; neither is it at all uncommon to see persons, in this progress of strife and variance, change parts; and him,

who was at first the injured person, become more injurious and blamable than the aggressor. Put the case then, that the law of retaliation was universally received and allowed, as an innocent rule of life, by all; and the observance of it thought by many (and then it would soon come to be thought by all) a point of honour; this supposes every man in private cases to pass sentence in his own cause, and likewise that anger or resentment is to be the judge. Thus, from the numberless partialities which we all have for ourselves, every one would often think himself injured when he was not; and in most cases would represent an injury as much greater than it really is; the imagined dignity of the person offended would scarce ever fail to magnify the offence. And if bare retaliation, or returning just the mischief received, always begets resentment in the person upon whom we retaliate, what would that excess do? Add to this, that he likewise has his partialities—there is no going on to represent this scene of rage and madness; it is manifest there would be no bounds nor any end. If the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water, what would it come to when allowed this free and unrestrained course? As coals are to burning coals, or wood to fire; so would these contentious men be to kindle strife. And since the indulgence of revenge hath manifestly this tendency, and does actually produce these effects in proportion as it is allowed; a passion of so dangerous a nature ought not to be indulged, were there no other reason against it.

Secondly, It hath been shown that the passion of resentment was placed in man, upon supposition of, and as a prevention or remedy to, irregularity and disorder. Now whether it be allowed or not, that the passion itself and the gratification of it joined together are painful to the malicious person; it must however be so with respect to the person towards whom it is exercised, and upon whom the revenge is taken. Now, if we consider mankind, according to that fine allusion of St. Paul, as one body, and every one members one of another; it must be allowed that resentment is, with respect to society, a painful remedy. Thus then the very notion or idea of this passion, as a remedy or prevention of evil, and as in itself a painful means, plainly shows that it

ought never to be made use of, but only in order to produce some greater good.

It is to be observed, that this argument is not founded upon an allusion or simile; but that it is drawn from the very nature of the passion itself, and the end for which it was given us. We are obliged to make use of words taken from sensible things, to explain what is the most remote from them: and every one sees, from whence the words prevention and remedy are taken. But if you please, let these words be dropped: the thing itself, I suppose, may be expressed without them.

That mankind is a community, that we all stand in a relation to each other, that there is a public end and interest of society which each particular is obliged to promote, is the sum of morals. Consider then the passion of resentment, as given to this one body, as given to society. Nothing can be more manifest, than that resentment is to be considered as a secondary passion, placed in us upon supposition, upon account of, and with regard to injury; not, to be sure, to promote and further it, but to render it, and the inconveniences and miseries arising from it, less and fewer than they would be without this passion. It is as manifest, that the indulgence of it is, with regard to society, a painful means of obtaining these ends. Considered in itself, it is very undesirable, and what society must very much wish to be without. It is in every instance absolutely an evil in itself; because it implies producing misery: and consequently must never be indulged or gratified for itself, by any one who considers mankind as a community or family, and himself as a member of it.

Let us now take this in another view. Every natural appetite, passion and affection, may be gratified in particular instances, without being subservient to the particular chief end, for which these several principles were respectively implanted in our nature. And, if neither this end, nor any other moral obligation be contradicted, such gratification is innocent. Thus, I suppose, there are cases in which each of these principles, this one of resentment excepted, may innocently be gratified, without being subservient to what is the main end of it: that is, though it does not conduce to, yet it may be gratified without contradicting that end, or any other

obligation. But the gratification of the resentment, if it be not conducive to the end for which it was given us, must necessarily contradict, not only the general obligation to benevolence, but likewise that particular end itself. The end, for which it was given, is to prevent or remedy injury; *i. e.* the misery occasioned by injury; *i. e.* misery itself: and the gratification of it consists in producing misery; *i. e.* in contradicting the end, for which it was implanted in our nature.

This whole reasoning is built upon the difference there is between this passion and all others. No other principle, or passion, hath for its end the misery of our fellow-creatures. But malice and revenge meditates evil itself; and to do mischief, to be the author of misery, is the very thing which gratifies the passion: this is what it directly tends towards, as its proper design. Other vices eventually do mischief: this alone aims at it as an end.

Nothing can with reason be urged in justification of revenge, from the good effects which the indulgence of it were before mentioned[1] to have upon the affairs of the world; because, though it be a remarkable instance of the wisdom of Providence to bring good out of evil, yet vice is vice to him who is guilty of it. "But suppose these good effects are foreseen:" that is, suppose reason in a particular case leads a man the same way as passion? Why then, to be sure, he should follow his reason, in this as well as in all other cases. So that, turn the matter which way ever you will, no more can be allowed to this passion, than that hath been already.[2]

As to that love of our enemies, which is commanded; this 2
supposes the general obligation to benevolence or good-will towards mankind: and this being supposed, that precept is no more than to forgive injuries; that is, to keep clear of those abuses before-mentioned: because that we have the habitual temper of benevolence, is taken for granted.

Resentment is not inconsistent with good-will: for we often see both together in very high degrees; not only in parents towards their children, but in cases of friendship and dependence, where there is no natural relation. These contrary passions, though they may lessen, do not neces-

[1] Sermon VIII. p. 442. [2] Sermon VIII. p. 441, 442

sarily destroy each other. We may therefore love our enemy, and yet have resentment against him for his injurious behaviour towards us. But when this resentment entirely destroys our natural benevolence towards him, it is excessive, and becomes malice or revenge. The command, to prevent its having this effect, *i. e.* to forgive injuries, is the same as to love our enemies; because that love is always supposed, unless destroyed by resentment.

b "But though mankind is the natural object of benevolence, yet may it not be lessened upon vice, *i. e.* injury?" Allowed: But if every degree of vice or injury must destroy that benevolence, then no man is the object of our love; for no man is without faults.

"But if lower instances of injury may lessen our benevolence, why may not higher, or the highest, destroy it?" The answer is obvious. It is not man's being a social creature, much less his being a moral agent, from whence alone our obligations to goodwill towards him arise. There is an obligation to it prior to either of these, arising from his being a sensible creature; that is, capable of happiness or misery. Now this obligation cannot be superseded by his moral character. What justifies public executions is, not that the guilt or demerit of the criminal dispenses with the obligation of goodwill, neither would this justify any severity; but, that his life is inconsistent with the quiet and happiness of the world: that is, a general and more enlarged obligation necessarily destroys a particular and more confined one of the same kind, inconsistent with it. Guilt or injury then does not dispense with or supersede the duty of love and good-will.

Neither does that peculiar regard to ourselves, which was before allowed to be natural[a] to mankind, dispense with it, because that can no way innocently heighten our resentment against those who have been injurious to ourselves in particular, any otherwise than as it heightens our sense of the injury or guilt; and guilt, though in the highest degree, does not, as hath been shown, dispense with or supersede the duty of love and good-will.

If all this be true, what can a man say, who will dispute the reasonableness, or the possibility of obeying the Divine

[a] Sermon VIII. p. 438.

precept we are now considering? Let him speak out, and it must be thus he will speak, "Mankind, *i. e.* a creature defective and faulty, is the proper object of good-will, whatever his faults are, when they respect others, but not when they respect me myself." That men should be affected in this manner, and act accordingly, is to be accounted for like other vices, but to assert that it ought, and must be thus, is self-partiality possessed of the very understanding.

Thus love to our enemies, and those who have been injurious to us, is so far from being a rant, as it has been profanely called, that it is in truth the law of our nature, and what every one must see and own, who is not quite blinded with self-love.

From hence it is easy to see, what is the degree in which we are commanded to love our enemies, or those who have been injurious to us. It were well if it could as easily be reduced to practice. It cannot be imagined, that we are required to love them with any peculiar kind of affection. But suppose the person injured to have a due, natural sense of the injury, and no more, he ought to be affected towards the injurious person in the same way any good men, uninterested in the case, would be, if they had the same just sense, which we have supposed the injured person to have, of the fault, after which there will yet remain real good-will towards the offender.

Now what is there in all this, which should be thought impracticable? I am sure there is nothing in it unreasonable. It is indeed no more than that we should not indulge a passion, which, if generally indulged, would propagate itself so as almost to lay waste the world; that we should suppress that partial, that false self-love, which is the weakness of our nature, that uneasiness and misery should not be produced, without any good purpose to be served by it, and that we should not be affected towards persons differently from what their nature and character require.

But since to be convinced that any temper of mind, and 3
course of behaviour, is our duty, and the contrary vicious, hath but a distant influence upon our temper and actions; let me add some few reflections, which may have a more direct tendency to subdue those vices in the heart, to beget in us this right temper, and lead us to a right behaviour

towards those who have offended us; which reflections however shall be such as will further show the obligations we are under to it.

No one, I suppose, would choose to have an indignity put upon him, or to be injuriously treated. If then there be any probability of a misunderstanding in the case, either from our imagining we are injured when we are not, or representing the injury to ourselves as greater than it really is; one would hope an intimation of this sort might be kindly received, and that people would be glad to find the injury not so great as they imagined. Therefore, without knowing particulars, I take upon me to assure all persons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a manner certain, that the offence is not so great as they themselves imagine. We are in such a peculiar situation, with respect to injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as they really are, than our eye can see itself. If we could place ourselves at a due distance, *i. e.* be really unprejudiced, we should frequently discern that to be in reality inadvertence and mistake in our enemy, which we now fancy we see to be malice or scorn. From this proper point of view, we should likewise in all probability see something of these latter in ourselves, and most certainly a great deal of the former. Thus the indignity or injury would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all. Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind—in these cases it magnifies everything which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens everything amiss in ourselves.

Anger also or hatred may be considered as another false medium of viewing things, which always represents characters and actions much worse than they really are. Ill-will not only never speaks, but never thinks well, of the person towards whom it is exercised. Thus, in cases of offence and enmity, the whole character and behaviour is considered with an eye to that particular part which has offended us, and the whole man appears monstrous, without anything right or human in him, whereas the resentment should surely at least be confined to that particular part of behaviour which gave offence, since the other parts of a man's life and character stand just the same as they did before.

In general, there are very few instances of enmity carried to any length, but that inadvertency, misunderstanding, some real mistake of the case, onone side however, if not on both, has a great share in it.

If these things were attended to, these ill-humours could not be carried to any length amongst good men, and they would be exceedingly abated amongst all. And one would hope they might be attended to, for all that these cautions come to, is really no more than desiring, that things may be considered and judged of as they are in themselves, that we should have an eye to, and beware of, what would otherwise lead us into mistakes. So that to make allowances for inadvertence, misunderstanding, for the partialities of self-love, and the false light which anger sets things in; I say, to make allowances for these, is not to be spoken of as an instance of humbleness of mind, or meekness and moderation of temper, but as what common sense should suggest, to avoid judging wrong of a matter before us, though virtue and morals were out of the case. And therefore it as much belongs to ill men, who will indulge the vice I have been arguing against, as to good men, who endeavour to subdue it in themselves. In a word, all these cautions, concerning anger and self-love, are no more than desiring a man, who was looking through a glass which either magnified or lessened, to take notice, that the objects are not in themselves what they appear through that medium.

To all these things one might add, that, resentment being out of the case, there is not properly speaking any such thing as direct ill-will in one man towards another: therefore the first indignity or injury, if it be not owing to inadvertence or misunderstanding, may however be resolved into other particular passions or self-love; principles quite distinct from ill-will, and which we ought all to be disposed to excuse in others, from experiencing so much of them in ourselves. A great man of antiquity is reported to have said, that, as he never was indulgent to any one fault in himself, he could not excuse those of others. This sentence could scarce with decency come out of the mouth of any human creature. But if we invert the former part, and put it thus: that he was indulgent to many faults in himself, as it is to be feared the best of us are, and yet was implacable; how

monstrous would such an assertion appear? And this is the case in respect to every human creature, in proportion as he is without the forgiving spirit I have been recommending.

Further, though injury, injustice, oppression, the baseness of ingratitude, are the natural objects of indignation, or if you please of resentment, as before explained; yet they are likewise the objects of compassion, as they are their own punishment, and without repentance will for ever be so. No one ever did a designed injury to another, but at the same time he did a much greater to himself. If therefore we would consider things justly, such an one is, according to the natural course of our affections, an object of compassion, as well as of displeasure: and to be affected really in this manner, I say really, in opposition to show and pretence, argues the true greatness of mind. We have an example of forgiveness in this way in its utmost perfection, and which indeed includes in it all that is good, in that prayer of our blessed Saviour on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

But lastly, the offences which we are all guilty of against God, and the injuries which men do to each other, are often mentioned together: and, making allowances for the infinite distance between the majesty of Heaven, and a frail mortal, and likewise for this, that he cannot possibly be affected or moved as we are; offences committed by others against ourselves, and the manner in which we are apt to be affected with them, give a real occasion for calling to mind our own sins against God. Now there is an apprehension and presentiment, natural to mankind, that we ourselves shall one time or other be dealt with, as we deal with others; and a peculiar acquiescence in, and feeling of the equity and justice of this equal distribution. This natural notion of equity the son of Sirach has put in the strongest way.[4] "He that revengeth shall find vengeance from the Lord, and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance. Forgive thy neighbour the hurt he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest. One man beareth hatred against another, and doth he seek pardon from the Lord? He showeth no mercy to a man which is like himself; and doth he ask forgiveness of his own sins?" Let any one read

[4] Ecclus. xxviii 1-4.

our Saviour's parable of the king who took account of his servants;[5] and the equity and rightness of the sentence, which was passed upon him who was unmerciful to his fellow-servant, will be felt. There is somewhat in human nature, which accords to, and falls in with that method of determination. Let us then place before our eyes the time which is represented in the parable; that of our own death, or the final judgment. Suppose yourselves under the apprehensions of approaching death; that you were just going to appear naked and without disguise before the Judge of all the earth, to give an account of your behaviour towards your fellow-creatures: could anything raise more dreadful apprehensions of that judgment, than the reflection that you had been implacable, and without mercy towards those who had offended you: without that forgiving spirit towards others, which that it may now be exercised towards yourselves, is your only hope? And these natural apprehensions are authorized by our Saviour's application of the parable: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."[5] On the other hand, suppose a good man in the same circumstance, in the last part and close of life; conscious of many frailties, as the best are, but conscious too that he had been meek, forgiving, and merciful; that he had in simplicity of heart been ready to pass over offences against himself: the having felt this good spirit will give him, not only a full view of the amiableness of it, but the surest hope that he shall meet with it in his Judge. This likewise is confirmed by his own declaration: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."[5] And that we might have a constant sense of it upon our mind, the condition is expressed in our daily prayer. A forgiving spirit is therefore absolutely necessary, as ever we hope for pardon of our sins; as ever we hope for peace of mind in our dying moments, or for the Divine mercy at that day when we shall most stand in need of it.

[5] Matt. xviii.

SERMON X.

UPON SELF-DECEIT.

2 Samuel xii. 7.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.

These words are the application of Nathan's parable to David, upon occasion of his adultery with Bathsheba, and the murder of Uriah her husband. The parable, which is related in the most beautiful simplicity, is this.[1] "There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the way-faring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." David passes sentence, not only that there should be a four-fold restitution made; but he proceeds to the rigour of justice, the man that hath done this thing shall die. And this judgment is pronounced with the utmost indignation against such an act of inhumanity, "As the Lord liveth, he shall surely die;" and his anger was greatly kindled against the man. And the prophet answered, "Thou art the man." He had been guilty of much greater inhumanity, with the utmost deliberation, thought, and contrivance. Near a year must have passed, between the time of the commission of his crimes, and the time of the prophet's coming to him; and it does not appear from the story, that he had in all this while the least remorse or contrition.

[1] Ver. 1.

There is not anything relating to men and characters more surprising and unaccountable than this partiality to themselves, which is observable in many, as there is nothing of more melancholy reflection respecting morality, virtue, and religion. Hence it is that many men seem perfect strangers to their own characters. They think, and reason, and judge quite differently upon any matter relating to themselves from what they do in cases of others where they are not interested; hence it is one hears people exposing follies which they themselves are eminent for, and talking with great severity against particular vices, which, if all the world be not mistaken, they themselves are notoriously guilty of. This self-ignorance and self-partiality may be in all different degrees; it is a lower degree of it which David himself refers to in these words, "Who can tell how oft he offendeth? Cleanse thou me from my secret faults." This is the ground of that advice of Elihu to Job, "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, that which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." And Solomon saw this thing in a very strong light, when he said, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." This likewise was the reason why that precept, "know thyself," was so frequently inculcated by the philosophers of old, for if it were not for that partial and fond regard to ourselves, it would certainly be no great difficulty to know our own character, what passes within, the bent and bias of our mind, much less would there be any difficulty in judging rightly of our own actions; but from this partiality it frequently comes to pass that the observation, of many men's being themselves last of all acquainted with what falls out in their own families, may be applied to a nearer home—to what passes within their own breasts.

There is plainly, in the generality of mankind, an absence of doubt or distrust, in a very great measure, as to their moral character and behaviour, and likewise a disposition to take for granted that all is right and well with them in these respects. The former is owing to their not reflecting, not exercising their judgment upon themselves, the latter to self-love. I am not speaking of that extravagance which is sometimes to be met with, instances of persons declaring in words at length that they never were in the wrong, nor had

ever any diffidence to the justness of their conduct in their whole lives. No, these people are too far gone to have anything said to them. The thing before us is indeed of this kind, but in a lower degree, and confined to the moral character, somewhat of which we almost all of us have without reflecting upon it. Now consider how long, and how grossly, a person of the best understanding might be imposed upon by one of whom he had not any suspicion, and in whom he placed an entire confidence, especially if there were friendship and real kindness in the case; surely this holds even stronger with respect to that self we are all so fond of. Hence arises in men a disregard of reproof and instruction, rules of conduct and moral discipline, which occasionally come in their way; a disregard, I say, of these, not in every respect, but in this single one, namely, as what may be of service to them in particular towards mending their own hearts and tempers and making them better men. It never in earnest comes into their thoughts whether such admonitions may not relate and be of service to themselves, and this quite distinct from a positive persuasion to the contrary, a persuasion from reflection that they are innocent and blameless in those respects. Thus we may invert the observation which is somewhere made upon Brutus, that he never read but in order to make himself a better man. It scarce comes into the thoughts of the generality of mankind that this use is to be made of moral reflections which they meet with; that this use, I say, is to be made of them by themselves, for everybody observes and wonders that it is not done by others.

Further, there are instances of persons having so fixed and steady an eye upon their own interest, whatever they place it in, and the interest of those whom they consider as themselves, as in a manner to regard nothing else; their views are almost confined to this alone. Now we cannot be acquainted with, or in any propriety of speech be said to know anything but what we attend to; if, therefore, they attend only to one side, they really will not, cannot see or know what is to be alleged on the other. Though a man hath the best eyes in the world he cannot see any way but that which he turns them. Thus these persons, without passing over the least, the most minute thing which can-

possibly be urged in favour of themselves, shall overlook entirely the plainest and most obvious things on the other side, and whilst they are under the power of this temper, thought and consideration upon the matter before them has scarce any tendency to set them right, because they are engaged, and their deliberation concerning an action to be done, or reflection upon it afterwards, is not to see whether it be right, but to find out reasons to justify or palliate it; palliate it, not to others, but to themselves.

In some there is to be observed a general ignorance of themselves and wrong way of thinking and judging in everything relating to themselves—their fortune, reputation, everything in which self can come in, and this perhaps attended with the rightest judgment in all other matters. In others this partiality is not so general, has not taken hold of the whole man, but is confined to some particular favourite passion, interest, or pursuit; suppose ambition, covetousness, or any other: and these persons may probably judge and determine what is perfectly just and proper, even in things in which they themselves are concerned, if these things have no relation to their particular favourite passion or pursuit. Hence arises that amazing incongruity and seeming inconsistency of character from whence slight observers take it for granted that the whole is hypocritical and false, not being able otherwise to reconcile the several parts, whereas, in truth, there is real honesty so far as it goes. There is such a thing as men's being honest to such a degree and in such respects but no further, and this, as it is true, so it is absolutely necessary to be taken notice of and allowed them, such general and undistinguishing censure of their whole characters, as designing and false, being one main thing which confirms them in their self-deceit. They know that the whole censure is not true, and so take it for granted that no part of it is.

But to go on with the explanation of the thing itself, vice in general consists in having an unreasonable and too great regard to ourselves in comparison of others. Robbery and murder is never from the love of injustice or cruelty, but to gratify some other passion, to gain some supposed advantage, and it is false selfishness alone, whether cool or passionate, which makes a man resolutely pursue that end, be

it ever so much to the injury of another; but, whereas, in common and ordinary wickedness, this unreasonableness, this partiality and selfishness relates only, or chiefly, to the temper and passions; in the characters we are now considering it reaches to the understanding, and influences the very judgment.[2] And besides that general want of distrust and diffidence concerning our own character, there are, you see, two things which may thus prejudice and darken the understanding itself, that overfondness for ourselves which we are all so liable to, and also being under the power of any particular passion or appetite, or engaged in any particular pursuit; and these, especially the last of the two, may be in so great a degree as to influence our judgment even of other persons and their behaviour; thus a man whose temper is formed to ambition or covetousness shall even approve of them sometimes in others.

This seems to be, in a good measure, the account of self-partiality and self-deceit, when traced up to its original; whether it be, or be not thought satisfactory, that there is such a thing is manifest, and that it is the occasion of great part of the unreasonable behaviour of men towards each other; that by means of it they palliate their vices and

[2] That peculiar regard for ourselves which frequently produces this partiality of judgment in our own favour, may have a quite contrary effect, and occasion the utmost diffidence and distrust of ourselves; were it only, as it may set us upon a more frequent and strict survey and review of our own character and behaviour. This search or recollection itself implies somewhat of diffidence; and the discoveries we make, what is brought to our view, may possibly increase it. Goodwill to another may either blind our judgment, so as to make us overlook his faults; or it may put us upon exercising that judgment with greater strictness, to see whether he is so faultless and perfect as we wish him. If that peculiar regard to ourselves leads us to examine our own character with this greater severity, in order really to improve and grow better, it is the most commendable turn of mind possible, and can scarce be to excess. But if, as everything hath its counterfeit, we are so much employed about ourselves in order to disguise what is amiss, and to make a better appearance; or if our attention to ourselves has chiefly this effect, it is liable to run up into the greatest weakness and excess, and is like all other excesses its own disappointment; for scarce any show themselves to advantage, who are over-solicitous of doing so.

follies to themselves, and that it prevents their applying to themselves those reproofs and instructions which they meet with either in Scripture or in moral and religious discourses, though exactly suitable to the state of their own mind and the course of their behaviour. There is one thing further to be added here, that the temper we distinguish by hardness of heart with respect to others, joined with this self-partiality, will carry a man almost any lengths of wickedness in the way of oppression, hard usage of others, and even to plain injustice, without his having, from what appears, any real sense at all of it. This, indeed, was not the general character of David, for he plainly gave scope to the affections of compassion and goodwill as well as to his passions of another kind.

But as some occasions and circumstances lie more open to this self-deceit, and give it greater scope and opportunities than others, these require to be particularly mentioned.

It is to be observed, then, that as there are express determinate acts of wickedness, such as murder, adultery, theft, so, on the other hand, there are numberless cases in which the vice and wickedness cannot be exactly defined, but consists in a certain general temper and course of action, or in the neglect of some duty, suppose charity or any other, whose bounds and degrees are not fixed. This is the very province of self-deceit and self-partiality, here it governs without check or control. "For what commandment is there broken? Is there a transgression where there is no law? a vice which cannot be defined?"

Whoever will consider the whole commerce of human life, will see that a great part, perhaps the greatest part of the intercourse amongst mankind cannot be reduced to fixed determinate rules; yet in these cases there is a right and a wrong; a merciful, a liberal, a kind and compassionate behaviour, which surely is our duty, and an unmerciful contracted spirit, a hard and oppressive course of behaviour, which is most certainly immoral and vicious; but who can define precisely wherein that contracted spirit and hard usage of others consist, as murder and theft may be defined? There is not a word in our language which expresses more detestable wickedness than oppression, yet the nature of this vice cannot be so exactly stated, nor the bounds of

it so determinately marked, as that we shall be able to say in all instances where rigid right and justice ends and oppression begins. In these cases there is great latitude left for every one to determine for and consequently to deceive himself. It is chiefly in these cases that self-deceit comes in, as every one must see that there is much larger scope for it here than in express, single, determinate acts of wickedness; however, it comes in with respect to the circumstances attending the most gross and determinate acts of wickedness. Of this the story of David, now before us, affords the most astonishing instance. It is really prodigious to see a man, before so remarkable for virtue and piety, going on deliberately from adultery to murder with the same cool contrivance, and from what appears, with as little disturbance, as a man would endeavour to prevent the ill consequences of a mistake he had made in any common matter. That total insensibility of mind with respect to those horrid crimes, after the commission of them, manifestly shows that he did some way or other delude himself, and this could not be with respect to the crimes themselves, they were so manifestly of the grossest kind. What the particular circumstances were with which he extenuated them, and quieted and deceived himself, is not related.

Having thus explained the nature of internal hypocrisy and self-deceit, and remarked the occasions upon which it exerts itself, there are several things further to be observed concerning it; that all of the sources to which it was traced up are sometimes observable together in one and the same person, but that one of them is more remarkable, and to a higher degree, in some, and others of them are so in others; that in general it is a complicated thing, and may be in all different degrees and kinds; that the temper itself is essentially in its own nature vicious and immoral. It is unfairness; it is dishonesty; it is falseness of heart, and is therefore so far from extenuating guilt that it is itself the greatest of all guilt in proportion to the degree it prevails, for it is a corruption of the whole moral character in its principle. Our understanding and sense of good and evil is the light and guide of life; if, therefore, this light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness![3] For this

[3] Matt. vi. 23.

reason our Saviour puts an evil eye as the direct opposite to a single eye; the absence of that simplicity, which these last words imply, being itself evil and vicious. And whilst men are under the power of this temper, in proportion still to the degree they are so, they are fortified on every side against conviction: and when they hear the vice and folly of what is in truth their own course of life, exposed in the justest and strongest manner, they will often assent to it, and even carry the matter further; persuading themselves, one does not know how, but some way or other persuading themselves, that they are out of the case, and that it hath no relation to them. Yet, notwithstanding this, there frequently appears a suspicion, that all is not right, or as it should be; and perhaps there is always at bottom somewhat of this sort. There are doubtless many instances of the ambitious, the revengeful, the covetous, and those whom with too great indulgence we only call the men of pleasure, who will not allow themselves to think how guilty they are, who explain and argue away their guilt to themselves: and though they do really impose upon themselves in some measure, yet there are none of them but have, if not a proper knowledge, yet at least, an implicit suspicion, where the weakness lies, and what part of their behaviour they have reason to wish unknown or forgotten for ever. Truth, and real good sense, and thorough integrity, carry along with them a peculiar consciousness of their own genuineness: there is a feeling belonging to them, which does not accompany their counterfeits, error, folly, half-honesty, partial and slight regards to virtue and right, so far only as they are consistent with that course of gratification which men happen to be set upon. And, if this be the case; it is much the same, as if we should suppose a man to have had a general veiw of some scene, enough to satisfy him that it was very disagreeable, and then to shut his eyes, that he might not have a particular or distinct view of its several deformities. It is as easy to close the eyes of the mind, as those of the body: and the former is more frequently done with wilfulness, and yet not attended to, than the latter; the actions of the mind being more quick and transient than those of the senses. This may be further illustrated by another thing observable in ordinary life. It is not uncommon for persons, who run out their fortunes,

entirely to neglect looking into the state of their affairs, and this from a general knowledge that the condition of them is bad. These extravagant people are perpetually ruined before they themselves expected it: and they tell you for an excuse, and tell you truly, that they did not think they were so much in debt, or that their expenses so far exceeded their income. And yet no one will take this for an excuse, who is sensible that their ignorance of their particular circumstances was owing to their general knowledge of them; that is, their general knowledge, that matters were not well with them, prevented their looking into particulars. There is somewhat of the like kind with this in respect to morals, virtue, and religion. Men find that the survey of themselves, their own heart and temper, their own life and behaviour, doth not afford them satisfaction: things are not as they should be: therefore they turn away, will not go over particulars, or look deeper, lest they should find more amiss. For who would choose to be put out of humour with himself? No one surely, if it were not in order to mend, and to be more thoroughly and better pleased with himself for the future.

If this sincere self-enjoyment and home-satisfaction be thought desirable, and worth some pains and diligence; the following reflections will, I suppose, deserve your attention; as what may be of service and assistance to all who are in any measure honestly disposed, for avoiding that fatal self-deceit, and towards getting acquainted with themselves.

The first is, that those who have never had any suspicion of, who have never made allowances for this weakness in themselves, who have never (if I may be allowed such a manner of speaking) caught themselves in it, may almost take for granted that they have been very much misled by it. For consider: nothing is more manifest, than that affection and passion of all kinds influence the judgment. Now as we have naturally a greater regard to ourselves than to others, as the private affection is more prevalent than the public; the former will have proportionally a greater influence upon the judgment, upon our way of considering things. People are not backward in owning this partiality of judgment, in cases of friendship and natural relation. The reason is obvious, why it is not so readily acknowledged, when the interest which misleads us is more confined, con-

fined to ourselves: but we all take notice of it in each other in these cases. There is not any observation more common, than that there is no judging of a matter from hearing only one side. This is not founded upon supposition, at least it is not always, of a formed design in the relater to deceive: for it holds in cases, where he expects that the whole will be told over again by the other side. But the supposition, which this observation is founded upon, is the very thing now before us; namely, that men are exceedingly prone to deceive themselves, and judge too favourably in every respect, where themselves and their own interest are concerned. Thus, though we have not the least reason to suspect that such an interested person hath any intention to deceive us, yet we of course make great allowances for his having deceived himself. If this be general, almost universal, it is prodigious that every man can think himself an exception, and that he is free from this self-partiality. The direct contrary is the truth. Every man may take for granted that he has a great deal of it, till, from the strictest observation upon himself, he finds particular reason to think otherwise.

Secondly, There is one easy and almost sure way to avoid being misled by this self-partiality, and to get acquainted with our real character: to have regard to the suspicious part of it, and keep a steady eye over ourselves in that respect. Suppose then a man fully satisfied with himself, and his own behaviour; such an one, if you please, as the Pharisee in the Gospel, or a better man—well, but allowing this good opinion you have of yourself to be true, yet every one is liable to be misrepresented. Suppose then an enemy were to set about defaming you, what part of your character would he single out? What particular scandal, think you, would he be most likely to fix upon you? And what would the world be most ready to believe? There is scarce a man living but could, from the most transient superficial view of himself, answer this question. What is that ill thing, that faulty behaviour, which I am apprehensive an enemy, who was thoroughly acquainted with me, would be most likely to lay to my charge, and which the world would be most apt to believe? It is indeed possible that a man may not be guilty in that respect. All that I say is, let him in plainness and honesty fix upon that part of his character for a particu-

lar survey and reflection; and by this he will come to [cut off]
acquainted, whether he be guilty or innocent in that respe[cut off]
and how far he is one or the other.

Thirdly, It would very much prevent our being misled [cut off]
this self-partiality, to reduce that practical rule of o[cut off]
Saviour, whatsoever ye would that men should do to yo[cut off]
even so do unto them, to our judgment, and way of thinkin[cut off]
This rule, you see, consists of two parts. One is, to subs[cut off]
tute another for yourself, when you take a survey of a[cut off]
part of your behaviour, or consider what is proper and fit a[cut off]
reasonable for you to do upon any occasion: the other pa[cut off]
is, that you substitute yourself in the room of another; co[cut off]
sider yourself as the person affected by such a behaviour, [cut off]
towards whom such an action is done: and then you wou[cut off]
not only see, but likewise feel, the reasonableness or unre[cut off]
sonableness of such an action or behaviour. But alas, t[cut off]
rule itself may be dishonestly applied: there are persons, w[cut off]
have not impartiality enough with respect to themselv[cut off]
nor regard enough for others, to be able to make a just appl[cut off]
cation of it. This just application, if men would honest[cut off]
make it, is in effect all that I have been recommending; [cut off]
is the whole thing, the direct contrary to that inward d[cut off]
honesty as respecting our intercourse with our fello[cut off]
creatures. And even the bearing this rule in their though[cut off]
may be of some service; the attempt thus to apply it, is [cut off]
attempt towards being fair and impartial, and may char[cut off]
unawares to show them to themselves, to show them the tru[cut off]
of the case they are considering.

Upon the whole it is manifest, that there is such a thi[cut off]
as this self-partiality and self-deceit: that in some person[cut off]
is to a degree which would be thought incredible, were [cut off]
the instances before our eyes; of which the behaviour [cut off]
David is perhaps the highest possible one, in a single p[cut off]
ticular case; for there is not the least appearance, that [cut off]
reached his general character: that we are almost all of [cut off]
influenced by it in some degree, and in some respects: t[cut off]
therefore every one ought to have an eye to and beware of[cut off]
And all that I have further to add upon this subject is, t[cut off]
either there is a difference between right and wrong, or th[cut off]
is not: religion is true, or it is not. If it be not, there is [cut off]
reason for any concern about it: but if it be true, it requi[cut off]

real fairness of mind and honesty of heart. And, if people will be wicked, they had better of the two be so from the common vicious passions without such refinements, than from this deep and calm source of delusion; which undermines the whole principle of good; darkens that light, that candle of the Lord within, which is to direct our steps; and corrupts conscience, which is the guide of life.

SERMON XI.

UPON THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

[Of the love of our neighbour as related to self-love (xi.), and as including all virtue (xii.)

INTRO.—Contracted affections (like self-love), may oppose their own end, private good. The supposed contrariety between benevolence and self-love may be only apparent.

1 Self-love, as distinguished from other passions.

a Self-love has an internal object, other affections external objects.

b Such affections distinct from self-love, though part of ourselves.

c All language recognises this distinction. Self-love produces interested actions; particular affections, actions which are friendly, ambitious, passionate, etc.

d Happiness does not consist in self-love, but in the wise gratification of all our affections.

e Self-love often fails to produce happiness; it often produces anxiety, and

f When in excess, produces misery.

Hence self-love is not only distinct from particular affections, but is so far from being our only rule, that it often disappoints itself, especially when made our only principle.

2 Self-love as distinguished from benevolence.

a These are distinguished, though not therefore opposed.

Shown not to be opposed—

1 From the nature of the affections themselves, self-love does not exclude particular affections, nor does benevolence.

All particular affections equally interested or disinterested.

2 From the course of action suggested by them—

Affections tend both to private and to public good.

Their tendency to one object does not disturb their connexion with another.

Benevolence produces as much enjoyment as ambition.

3 From the temper of mind produced by them—

(a) Benevolence gives a pleasure over and above other pleasures, with which it does not interfere.

(b) Has an assurance of special favour from God.

(c) Hence self-love and benevolence are so far from being opposed, that the second may be the easiest way of gratifying the first.

(d) It is true that particular affections may be gratified, so as to interfere with self-love, but benevolence interferes with it less than any other.

(e) The origin of the mistake, that benevolence and self-love interfere, is in the confusion of property and happiness. That they are not opposed is shown—

4 Further, from Scripture, which inculcates benevolence, and yet recognises self-love, and appeals to it.

The foregoing is intended to gain favour for benevolence, which is peculiarly enjoined by the spirit and facts of the gospel; and which (it is important to show) is not interfered with by that desire for happiness (self-love), which is natural to man.]

ROMANS xiii. 9.

And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

INTRO. IT is commonly observed, that there is a disposition in men to complain of the viciousness and corruption of the age in which they live, as greater than that of former ones, which is usually followed with this further observation, that mankind has been in that respect much the same in all times. Now not to determine whether this last be not contradicted by the accounts of history; thus much can scarce be doubted, that vice and folly take different turns, and some particular kinds of them are more open and avowed in some ages than in others; and, I suppose, it may be spoken of as very much the distinction of the present, to profess a contracted spirit, and greater regards to self-interest, than appears to have been done formerly. Upon this account it seems worth while to inquire, whether private interest is likely to be promoted in proportion to the degree in which self-love engrosses us,

and prevails over all other principles, or whether the contracted affection may not possibly be so prevalent as to disappoint itself, and even contradict its own end, private good.

And since, further, there is generally thought to be some peculiar kind of contrariety between self-love and the love of our neighbour, between the pursuit of public and of private good; insomuch, that when you are recommending one of these, you are supposed to be speaking against the other, and from hence arises a secret prejudice against, and frequently open scorn of all talk of public spirit, and real good-will to our fellow creatures; it will be necessary to inquire what respect benevolence hath to self-love, and the pursuit of private interest to the pursuit of public, or whether there be anything of that peculiar inconsistence and contrariety between them, over and above what there is between self-love and other passions and particular affections, and their respective pursuits.

These inquiries, it is hoped, may be favourably attended to, for there shall be all possible concessions made to the favourite passion, which hath so much allowed to it, and whose cause is so universally pleaded, it shall be treated with the utmost tenderness, and concern for its interests.

In order to this, as well as to determine the forementioned questions, it will be necessary to consider the nature, the object and end of that self-love, as distinguished from other principles or affections in the mind, and their respective objects.

Every man hath a general desire of his own happiness; and likewise a variety of particular affections, passions, and appetites to particular external objects. The former proceeds from, or is self-love, and seems inseparable from all sensible creatures, who can reflect upon themselves and their own interest or happiness, so as to have that interest an object to their minds; what is to be said of the latter is, that they proceed from, or together make up that particular nature, according to which man is made. The object the former pursues is somewhat internal, our own happiness, enjoyment, satisfaction, whether we have, or have not a distinct particular perception what it is, or wherein it consists; the objects of the latter are this or that particular external thing, which the affections tend towards, and of which it hath always a

particular idea or perception. The principle we call self-love never seeks anything external for the sake of the thing, but only as a means of happiness or good, particular affections rest in the external things themselves. One belongs to man as a reasonable creature reflecting upon his own interest or happiness. The other, though quite distinct from reason, are as much a part of human nature.

That all particular appetites and passions are towards external things themselves, distinct from the pleasure arising from them, is manifested from hence, that there could not be this pleasure, were it not for that prior suitableness between the object and the passion, there could be no enjoyment or delight from one thing more than another, from eating food more than from swallowing a stone, if there were not an affection or appetite to one thing more than another.

b Every particular affection, even the love of our neighbour, is as really our own affection, as self-love, and the pleasure arising from its gratification is as much my own pleasure, as the pleasure self-love would have, from knowing I myself should be happy some time hence, would be my own pleasure. And if, because every particular affection is a man's own, and the pleasure arising from its gratification his own pleasure, or pleasure to himself, such particular affection must be called self-love,[1] according to this way of speaking, no creature whatever can possibly act but merely from self-love; and every action and every affection whatever is to be resolved up into this one principle. But then this is not the ...nguage of mankind: or if it were, we should want words to ...press the difference, between the principle of an action, proceeding from cool consideration that it will be to my own advantage, and an action, suppose of revenge, or of friendship, by which a man runs upon certain ruin, to do evil or good to another. It is manifest the principles of these actions are totally different, and so want different words to ...stinguished by; all that they agree in is, that they both ...ed from, and are done to gratify an inclination in a ...lf. But the principle or inclination in one case is ...the other, hatred or love of another. There is ...ction between the cool principle of self-love, or ...of our own happiness, as one part of our na-

[1] ... Note on p. 390.]

ture, and one principle of action; and the particular affections towards particular external objects, as another part of our nature, and another principle of action. How much soever therefore is to be allowed for self-love, yet it cannot be allowed to be the whole of our inward constitution, because, you see, there are other parts or principles which come into it.

Further, private happiness or good is all which self-love can make us desire, or be concerned about; in having this, consists its gratification, it is an affection to ourselves, a regard to our own interest, happiness, and private good; and in the proportion a man hath this, he is interested, or a lover of himself. Let this be kept in mind; because there is commonly, as I shall presently have occasion to observe, another sense put upon these words. On the other hand, particular affections tend towards particular external things; these are their objects, having these is their end, in this consists their gratification, no matter whether it be, or be not, upon the whole, our interest or happiness. An action done from the former of these principles is called an interested action. An action proceeding from any of the latter has its denomination of passionate, ambitious, friendly, revengeful, or any other, from the particular appetite or affection from which it proceeds. Thus self-love as one part of human nature, and the several particular principles as the other part, are, themselves, their objects and ends, stated and shown.

From hence it will be easy to see, how far, and in what ways, each of these can contribute and be subservient to the private good of the individual. Happiness does not consist in self-love. The desire of happines is no more the thing itself, than the desire of riches is the possession or enjoyment of them. People may love themselves with the most entire and unbounded affection, and yet be extremely miserable. Neither can self-love any way help them out, but by setting them on work to get rid of the causes of their misery, to gain or make use of those objects which are by nature adapted to afford satisfaction. Happiness or satisfaction consists only in the enjoyment of those objects, which are by nature suited to our several particular appetites, passions, and affections. So that if self-love wholly engrosses us, and leaves no room for any other principle, there can be absolutely no such thing at all as happiness, or enjoyment of any kind whatever; since

happiness consists in the gratification of particular passions, which supposes the having of them. Self-love then does not constitute this or that to be our interest or good; but, our interest or good being constituted by nature, and supposed self-love only puts us upon obtaining and securing it. Therefore if it be probable that self-love may prevail and exert itself in a degree or manner which is not subservient to this end; then it will not follow, that our interest will be promoted in proportion to the degree in which that principle engrosses us, and prevails over others. Nay, further, the private and contracted affection, when it is not subservient to this end, private good, may, for anything that appears, have a direct contrary tendency and effect. And if we will consider the matter, we shall see that it often really has. Disengagement is absolutely necessary to enjoyment, and a person may have so steady and fixed an eye upon his own interest, whatever he places it in, as may hinder him from attending to many gratifications within his reach, which others have their minds free and open to. Over fondness for a child is not generally thought to be for its advantage; and if there be any guess to be made from appearances, surely that character we call selfish is not the most promising for happiness. Such a temper may plainly be and exert itself in a degree and manner which may give unnecessary and useless solicitude and anxiety, in a degree and manner which may prevent obtaining the means and materials of enjoyment, as well as the making use of them. Immoderate self-love does very ill consult its own interest: and how much soever a paradox it may appear, it is certainly true, that even from self-love we should endeavour to get over all inordinate regard to, and consideration of ourselves. Every one of our passions and affections hath its natural stint and bound, which may easily be exceeded; whereas our enjoyments can possibly be but in a determinate measure and degree. Therefore such excess of the affection, since it cannot procure any enjoyment, must in all cases be useless, but is generally attended with inconveniences, and often is downright pain and misery. This holds as much with regard to self-love as to all other affections. The natural degree of it, so far as it sets us on work to gain and make use of the materials of satisfaction may be to our real advantage, but

beyond or besides this, it is in several respects an inconvenience and disadvantage. Thus it appears, that private interest is so far from being likely to be promoted in proportion to the degree in which self-love engrosses us, and prevails over all other principles, that the contracted affection may be so prevalent as to disappoint itself, and even contradict its own end, private good.

"But who, except the most sordidly covetous, ever 2
thought there was any rivalship between the love of greatness, honour, power, or between sensual appetites, and self-love? No, there is a perfect harmony between them. It is by means of these particular appetites and affections that self-love is gratified in enjoyment, happiness, and satisfaction. The competition and rivalship is between self-love, and the love of our neighbour: that affection which leads us out of ourselves, makes us regardless of our own interest, and substitute that of another in its stead." Whether then there be any peculiar competition and contrariety in this case, shall now be considered.

Self-love and interestedness was stated to consist in or be an affection to ourselves, a regard to our own private good:
it is therefore distinct from benevolence, which is an affection 3
to the good of our fellow-creatures. But that benevolence is distinct from, that is, not the same thing with self-love, is no reason for its being looked upon with any peculiar suspicion; because every principle whatever, by means of which self-love is gratified, is distinct from it, and all things which are distinct from each other, are equally so. A man has an affection or aversion to another: that one of these tends to and is gratified by doing good, that the other tends to and is gratified by doing harm, does not in the least alter the respect which either one or the other of these inward feelings has to self-love. We use the word property so as to exclude any other persons having an interest in that of which we say a particular man has the property. And we often use the word selfish so as to exclude in the same manner all regards to the good of others. But the cases are not parallel: for though that exclusion is really part of the idea of property; yet such positive exclusion, or bringing this peculiar disregard to the good of others into the idea, or self-love, is in reality adding to the idea of changing it from what it was

before stated to consist in, namely, in an affection to ourselves.[2] This being the whole idea of self-love, it cannot otherwise exclude goodwill or love of others, than merely by not including it, no otherwise, than it excludes love of arts or reputation, or of anything else. Neither on the other hand does benevolence, any more than love of arts or of reputation, exclude self-love. Love of our neighbour then has just the same respect to, is no more distant from self-love, than hatred of our neighbour, or than love or hatred of anything else. Thus the principles, from which men rush upon certain ruin for the destruction of an enemy, and for the preservation of a friend, have the same respect to the private affection, and are equally interested, or equally disinterested: and it is of no avail, whether they are said to be one or the other. Therefore to those who are shocked to hear virtue spoken of as disinterested, it may be allowed that it is indeed absurd to speak thus of it; unless hatred, several particular instances of vice, and all the common affections and aversions in mankind, are acknowledged to be disinterested too. Is there any less inconsistence, between the love of inanimate things, or of creatures merely sensitive, and self-love; than between self-love, and the love of our neighbour? Is desire of and delight in the happiness of another any more a diminution of self-love, than desire of and delight in the esteem of another? They are both equally desire of and delight in somewhat external to ourselves: either both or neither are so. The object of self-love is expressed in the term, self: and every appetite of sense, and every particular affection of the heart, are equally interested or disinterested, because the objects of them all are equally self or somewhat else. Whatever ridicule therefore the mention of a disinterested principle or action may be supposed to lie open to, must, upon the matter being thus stated, relate to ambition, and every appetite and particular affection, as much as to benevolence. And indeed all the ridicule, and all the grave perplexity, of which this subject hath had its full share, is merely from words. The most intelligible way of speaking of it seems to be this: that self-love and the actions done in consequence of it (for these will presently appear to be the same as to this question) are interested; that particular affections towards external objects,

[2] P. 471.

and the actions done in consequence of those affections, are not so. But every one is at liberty to use words as he pleases. All that is here insisted upon is, that ambition, revenge, benevolence, all particular passions whatever, and all the actions they produce, are equally interested or disinterested.

Thus it appears that there is no peculiar contrariety between self-love and benevolence; no greater competition between these, than between any other particular affections and self-love. This relates to the affections themselves. Let us now see whether there be any peculiar contrariety between the respective courses of life which these affections lead to; whether there be any greater competition between the pursuit of private and of public good, than between any other particular pursuits and that of private good.

There seems no other reason to suspect that there is any such peculiar contrariety, but only that the courses of action which benevolence leads to, has a more direct tendency to promote the good of others, than that course of action which love of reputation, suppose, or any other particular affection leads to. But that any affection tends to the happiness of another, does not hinder its tending to one's own happiness too. That others enjoy the benefit of the air and the light of the sun, does not hinder but that these are as much one's own private advantage now, as they would be if we had the property of them exclusive of all others. So a pursuit which tends to promote the good of another, yet may have as great tendency to promote private interest, as a pursuit which does not tend to the good of another at all, or which is mischievous to him. All particular affections whatever, resentment, benevolence, love of arts, equally lead to a course of action for their own gratification, *i. e.*, the gratification of ourselves; and the gratification of each gives delight: so far then it is manifest they have all the same respect to private interest. Now take into consideration further concerning those three pursuits, that the end of the first is the harm, of the second, the good of another, of the last, somewhat indifferent; and is there any necessity that these additional considerations should alter the respect, which we before saw these three pursuits had to private interest; or render any one of them less conducive to it, than any other? Thus one man's affection is to honour as his end; in order to obtain which,

he thinks no pains too great. Suppose another with such a singularity of mind, as to have the same affection to public good as his end, which he endeavours with the same labour to obtain. In case of success, surely the man of benevolence hath as great enjoyment as the man of ambition; they both equally having the end their affections, in the same degree, tended to: but in case of disappointment, the benevolent man has clearly the advantage; since endeavouring to do good, considered as a virtuous pursuit, is gratified by its own consciousness, *i. e.*, is in a degree its own reward.

And as to these two, or benevolence and any other particular passions whatever, considered in a further view, as forming a general temper, which more or less disposes us for enjoyment of all the common blessings of life, distinct from their own gratification: is benevolence less the temper of tranquillity and freedom than ambition or covetousness? Does the benevolent man appear less easy with himself, from his love to his neighbour? Does he less relish his being? Is there any peculiar gloom seated on his face? Is his mind less open to entertainment, to any particular gratification? Nothing is more manifest, than that being in good-humour, which is benevolence whilst it lasts, is itself the temper of satisfaction and enjoyment.

Suppose then a man sitting down to consider how he might become most easy to himself, and attain the greatest pleasure he could; all that which is his real natural happiness. This can only consist in the enjoyment of those objects, which are by nature adapted to our several faculties. These particular enjoyments make up the sum total of our happiness: and they are supposed to arise from riches, honours, and the gratification of sensual appetites: be it so: yet none profess themselves so completely happy in these enjoyments, but that there is room left in the mind for others, if they were presented to them: nay these, as much as they engage us, are not thought so high, but that human nature is capable even of greater. Now there have been persons in all ages, who have professed that they found satisfaction in the exercise of charity, in the love of their neighbour, in endeavouring to promote the happiness of all they had to do with, and in the pursuit of what is just and right and good, as the general bent of their mind, and end of their life; and that

doing an action of baseness or cruelty, would be as great violence to their self, as much breaking in upon their nature, as any external force. Persons of this character would add, if they might be heard, that they consider themselves as acting in the view of an infinite Being, who is in a much higher sense the object of reverence and of love, than all the world besides: and therefore they could have no more enjoyment from a wicked action done under his eye, than the persons to whom they are making their apology could, if all mankind were the spectators of it; and that the satisfaction of approving themselves to his unerring judgment, to whom they thus refer all their actions, is a more continued settled satisfaction than any this world can afford; as also that they have, no less than others, a mind free and open to all the common innocent gratifications of it, such as they are. And if we go no further, does there appear any absurdity in this? Will any one take upon him to say, that a man cannot find his account in this general course of life, as much as in the most unbounded ambition, and the excesses of pleasure? Or that such a person has not consulted so well for himself, for the satisfaction and peace of his own mind, as the ambitious or dissolute man? And though the consideration, that God himself will in the end justify their taste, and support their cause, is not formally to be insisted upon here; yet thus much comes in, that all enjoyments whatever are much more clear and unmixed from the assurance that they will end well. Is it certain then that there is nothing in these pretensions to happiness? especially when there are not wanting persons, who have supported themselves with satisfactions of this kind in sickness, poverty, disgrace, and in the very pangs of death; whereas it is manifest all other enjoyments fail in these circumstances. This surely looks suspicious of having somewhat in it. Self-love methinks should be alarmed. May she not possibly pass over greater pleasures, than those she is so wholly taken up with?

The short of the matter is no more than this. Happiness consists in the gratification of certain affections, appetites, passions, with objects which are by Nature adapted to them. Self-love may indeed set us on work to gratify these: but happiness or enjoyment has no immediate connection with self-love but arises from such gratification alone. Love of

our neighbour is one of those affections. T
as a virtuous principle, is gratified by a c
endeavouring to promote the good of others;
as a natural affection, its gratification consist
accomplishment of this endeavour. Now
gratification of this affection, whether in that
or this accomplishment, has the same respect
indulgence of any other affection; they e
from or do not proceed from self-love, they
or equally exclude this principle. Thus it a
nevolence and the pursuit of public good h
great respect to self-love and the pursuit of
any other particular passions, and their respe
Neither is covetousness, whether as a temper
exception to this. For if by covetousness is
and pursuit of riches for their own sake, with
to, or consideration of the uses of them; this
do with self-love, as benevolence hath. But
usually meant, not such madness and tota
mind, but immoderate affection to and p
as possessions in order to some further end
faction, interest, or good. This therefore is
affection, or particular pursuit, but it is the g
of self-love, and the general pursuit of our o
which reason, the word selfish is by every o
to this temper and pursuit. Now as it is ridi
that self-love and the love of our neighbour a
neither is it asserted, that following these di
hath the same tendency and respect to ou
The comparison is not between self-love and
neighbour; between pursuit of our own in
interest of others: but between the several
tions in human nature towards external obje
of the comparison; and the one particular
good of our neighbour, as the other part of
been shown, that all these have the same res
and private interest.

d) There is indeed frequently an inconsistenc
between self-love or private interest, and t
ticular appetites, passions, affections, or th
lead to. But this competition or interfering

dental; and happens much oftener between pride, revenge, sensual gratifications, and private interest, than between private interest and benevolence. For nothing is more common, than to see men give themelves up to a passion or an affection to their known prejudice and ruin, and in direct contradiction to manifest and real interest, and the loudest calls of self-love: whereas the seeming competitions and interfering between benevolence and private interest, relate much more to the materials or means of enjoyment, than to enjoyment itself. There is often an interfering in the former, when there is none in the latter. Thus as to riches: so much money as a man gives away, so much less will remain in his possession. Here is a real interfering. But though a man cannot possibly give without lessening his fortune, yet there are multitudes might give without lessening their own enjoyment; because they may have more than they can turn to any real use or advantage to themselves. Thus the more thought and time anyone employs about the interests and good of others, he must necessarily have less to attend his own; but he may have so ready and large a supply of his own wants, that such thought might be really useless to himself, though of great service and assistance to others.

(e) The general mistake that there is some greater inconsistence between endeavouring to promote the good of another and self-interest, than between self-interest and pursuing anything else, seems, as hath already been hinted, to arise from our notions of property; and to be carried on by this property's being supposed to be itself our happiness or good. People are so very much taken up with this one subject, that they seem from it to have formed a general way of thinking, which they apply to other things that they have nothing to do with. Hence, in a confused and slight way, it might well be taken for granted, that another's having no interest in an affection (*i. e.*, his good not being the object of it) renders, as one may speak, the proprietor's interest in it greater; and that if another had an interest in it, this would render his less, or occasion that such affection could not be so friendly to self-love, or conducive to private good, as an affection or pursuit which has not a regard to the good of another. This I say might be taken for granted, whilst it was not attended to, that the object of every

particular affection is equally somewhat external to ourselves; and whether it be the good of another person, or whether it be any other external thing, makes no alteration with regard to its being one's own affection, and the gratification of it one's own private enjoyment. And so far as it is taken for granted, that barely having the means and materials of enjoyment is what constitutes interest and happiness; that our interest or good consists in possessions themselves, in having the property of riches, houses, lands, gardens, not in the enjoyment of them; so far it will even more strongly be taken for granted, in the way already explained, that an affection's conducing to the good of another, must even necessarily occasion it to conduce less to private good, if not to be positively detrimental to it. For, if property and happiness are one and the same thing, as by increasing the property of another, you lessen your property, so by promoting the happiness of another, you must lessen your own happiness. But whatever occasioned the mistake, I hope it has been fully proved to be one: as it has been proved, that there is no peculiar rivalship or competition between self-love and benevolence; that as there may be a competition between these two, so there may also between any particular affection whatever and self-love; that every particular affection, benevolence among the rest, is subservient to self-love by being the instrument of private enjoyment; and that in one respect benevolence contributes more to private interest, *i. e.*, enjoyment or satisfaction, than any other of the particular common affections, as it is in a degree its own gratification.

And to all these things may be added, that religion, from whence arises our strongest obligation to benevolence, is so far from disowning the principle of self-love, that it often addresses itself to that very principle, and always to the mind in that state when reason presides; and there can no access be had to the understanding but by convincing men that the course of life we would persuade them to is not contrary to their interest. It may be allowed, without any prejudice to the cause of virtue and religion, that our ideas of happiness and misery are of all our ideas the nearest and most important to us; that they will, nay, if you please, that they ought to prevail over those of order, and beauty,

and harmony, and proportion, if there should ever be, as it is impossible there ever should be, any inconsistence between them: though these last two, as expressing the fitness of actions, are real as truth itself. Let it be allowed though virtue or moral rectitude does indeed consist in affection to and pursuit of what is right and good, as such; yet that when we sit down in a cool hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit, till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it.

Common reason and humanity will have some influence upon mankind, whatever becomes of speculations: but, so far as the interests of virtue depend upon the theory of it being secured from open scorn, so far its very being in the world depends upon its appearing to have no contrariety to private interest and self-love. The foregoing observations therefore, it is hoped, may have gained a little ground in favour of the precept before us; the particular explanation of which, shall be the subject of the next discourse.

I will conclude at present, with observing the peculiar obligation which we are under to virtue and religion, as enforced in the verses following the text, in the Epistle for the day, from our Saviour's coming into the world. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light, etc. The meaning and force of which exhortation is, that Christianity lays us under new obligations to a good life, as by it the will of God is more clearly revealed, and as it affords additional motives to the practice of it, over and above those which arise out of the nature of virtue and vice; I might add, as our Saviour has set us a perfect example of goodness in our own nature. Now love and charity is plainly the thing in which he hath placed his religion; in which therefore, as we have any pretence to the name of Christians, we must place ours. He hath at once enjoined it upon us by way of command with peculiar force; and by his example as having undertaken the work of our salvation out of pure love and goodwill to mankind. The endeavour to set home this example upon our minds is a very proper employment of this season, which is bringing on the festival of his birth; which as it may teach us many

excellent lessons of humility, resignation, and obedience to the will of God; so there is none it recommends with greater authority, force and advantage, than this of love and charity; since it was for us men, and for our salvation, that he came down from heaven and was incarnate, and was made man; that he might teach us our duty, and more especially that he might enforce the practice of it, reform mankind, and finally bring us to that eternal salvation, of which he is the author to all those that obey him.

SERMON XII.

UPON THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

[INTRO.—The subject of the discourse. Consider—

1 The object of the affection;

Love of our neighbour, or benevolence, seeks the good of others, and in its noblest form it is the perfection of God.

Why defined as love *of our neighbour*.

2 The proper extent of the affection: We are to love others *as ourselves*. This implies—

1 That this love is to be of the *same kind*.

We have a common interest in others, and in ourselves.

This is the proper temper of virtue; *love*.

2 That our love for others is to bear a *certain proportion* to our love for ourselves.

A proportion in affections implied in all virtuous characters.

So a due proportion of benevolence and self-love is implied here.

What the proportion is to be, is not easily decided, for affection is not easily measured; but as to *actions*, the expressions of affection, the more others occupy our thoughts (provided we neglect not ourselves), the better. Even if this imply—

3 That our love for others is to equal our love for ourselves, no ill consequence can ensue, for

Men have other affections for themselves, not felt for others.

They are specially interested in themselves.

They have a particular perception of their own interests, so that there is no fear of self-neglect.

3 The influence of this affection upon our general temper. Its effect is—
1 To produce all charitableness.
2 To fit men for every relation and duty.
3 To moderate party feeling.
4 To prevent, or heal all strife.

4 This affection includes all virtue.

Reason, as subservient to benevolence, is supposed to operate in enforcing attention to particular relations.
1 Love prompts men to seek the greatest happiness of all, which is itself a discharge of all our obligations.
2 Love even prompts to the practice of personal virtues (temperance, etc.), and certainly the neglect of these virtues implies a deficiency of love to others.
(Note on the nature of virtue.
1 It may be our duty to regard other ends besides happiness.
2 We actually disapprove certain dispositions without thinking of consequences.
3 And approve others.)
3 Apart from particular natures and circumstances, love includes all goodness; and
4 Piety itself is the love of God, as an infinitely good Being.]

ROMANS xiii. 9.

And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

HAVING already removed the prejudices against public spirit, or the love of our neighbour, on the side of private interest and self-love; I proceed to the particular explanation of the precept before us, by showing, who is our neighbour: in what sense we are required to love him as ourselves: the influence such love would have upon our behaviour in life; and lastly, how this commandment comprehends in it all others. INTRO

I. The objects and due extent of this affection will be understood by attending to the nature of it, and to the nature and circumstances of mankind in this world. The 1

love of our neighbour is the same with charity, benevolence, or goodwill: it is an affection to the good and happiness of our fellow-creatures. This implies in it a disposition to produce happiness: and this is the simple notion of goodness, which appears so amiable wherever we meet with it. From hence it is easy to see, that the perfection of goodness consists in love to the whole universe. This is the perfection of Almighty God.

But as man is so much limited in his capacity, as so small a part of the creation comes under his notice and influence, and as we are not used to consider things in so general a way; it is not to be thought of, that the universe should be the object of benevolence to such creatures as we are. Thus in that precept of our Saviour,[1] Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect, the perfection of the Divine goodness is proposed to our imitation as it is promiscuous, and extends to the evil as well as the good; not as it is absolutely universal, imitation of it in this respect being plainly beyond us. The object is too vast. For this reason moral writers also have substituted a less general object for our benevolence, mankind. But this likewise is an object too general, and very much out of our view, Therefore persons more practical have, instead of mankind, put our country; and made the principle of virtue, of human virtue, to consist in the entire uniform love of our country; and this is what we call a public spirit; which in men of public stations is the character of a patriot. But this is speaking to the upper part of the world. Kingdoms and governments are large; and the sphere of action of far the greatest part of mankind is much narrower than the government they live under; or however, common men do not consider their actions as affecting the whole community of which they are members. There plainly is wanting a less general and nearer object of benevolence for the bulk of men, than that of their country. Therefore the Scripture, not being a book of theory and speculation, but a plain rule of life for mankind, has with the utmost possible propriety put the principle of virtue upon the love of our neighbour; which is that part of the universe, that part of mankind, that part of our country, which comes under our immediate

[1] Matt. v. 48.

notice, acquaintance, and influence, and with which we have to do.

This is plainly the true account or reason, why our Saviour places the principle of virtue in the love of our neighbour; and the account itself shows who are comprehended under that relation.

II. Let us now consider in what sense we are commanded 2
to love our neighbour as ourselves.

This precept, in its first delivery by our Saviour, is thus introduced: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself. These very different manners of expression do not lead our thoughts to the same measure or degree of love, common to both objects; but to one, peculiar to each. Supposing then, which is to be supposed, a distinct meaning and propriety in the words, as thyself; the precept we are considering will admit of any of these senses; that we bear the same kind of affection to our neighbour, as we do to ourselves; or, that the love we bear to our neighbour should have some certain proportion or other to self-love; or, lastly, that it should bear the particular proportion of equality, that it be in the same degree.

First. The precept may be understood as requiring only, that we have the same kind of affection to our fellow-creatures, as to ourselves; that, as every man has the principle of self-love, which disposes him to avoid misery, and consult his own happiness; so we should cultivate the affection of goodwill to our neighbour, and that it should influence us to have the same kind of regard to him. This at least must be commanded; and this will not only prevent our being injurious to him, but will also put us upon promoting his good. There are blessings in life, which we share in common with others; peace, plenty, freedom, healthful seasons. But real benevolence to our fellow-creatures would give us the notion of a common interest in a stricter sense; for in the degree we love one another, his interest, his joys and sorrows, are our own. It is from self-love that we form the notion of private good, and consider it as our own: love of our neighbour would teach us thus to appropriate to ourselves his good and welfare; to consider ourselves as having a real share in his happiness. Thus the principle of benevolence

would be an advocate within our own breasts, to take care of the interests of our fellow-creatures in all the interfering and competitions which cannot but be, from the imperfection of our nature, and the state we are in. It would likewise, in some measure, lessen that interfering; and hinder men from forming so strong a notion of private good, exclusive of the good of others, as we commonly do. Thus, as the private affection makes us in a peculiar manner sensible of humanity, justice, or injustice, when exercised towards ourselves; love of our neighbour would give us the same kind of sensibility in his behalf. This would be the greatest security of our uniform obedience to that most equitable rule; Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.

All this is indeed no more than that we should have a real love to our neighbour: but then, which is to be observed, the words, as thyself, express this in the most distinct manner, and determine the precept to relate to the affection itself. The advantage, which this principle of benevolence has over other remote considerations, is that it is itself the temper of virtue; and likewise, that it is the chief, nay the only effectual security of our performing the several offices of kindness we owe to our fellow-creatures. When from distant considerations men resolve upon anything to which they have no liking, or perhaps an averseness, they are perpetually finding out evasions and excuses; which need never be wanting, if people look for them: and they equivocate with themselves in the plainest cases in the world. This may be in respect to single determinate acts of virtue: but it comes in much more, where the obligation is to a general course of behaviour; and most of all, if it be such as cannot be reduced to fixed determinate rules. This observation may account for the diversity of the expression, in that known passage of the prophet Micah: to do justly, and to love mercy. A man's heart must be formed to humanity and benevolence, he must love mercy, otherwise he will not act mercifully in any settled course of behaviour. As consideration of the future sanctions of religion is our only security of persevering in our duty, in cases of great temptations: so to get our heart and temper formed to a love and liking of what is good is absolutely necessary in order to our be-

having rightly in the familiar and daily intercourses amongst mankind.

Secondly. The precept before us may be understood to 9
require, that we love our neighbour in some certain proportion or other, according as we love ourselves. And indeed a man's character cannot be determined by the love he bears to his neighbour, considered absolutely: but the proportion which this bears to self-love, whether it be attended to or not, is the chief thing which forms the character, and influences the actions. For as the form of the body is a composition of various parts; so likewise our inward structure is not simple or uniform, but a composition of various passions, appetites, affections, together with rationality; including in this last both the discernment of what is right, and a disposition to regulate ourselves by it. There is greater variety of parts in what we call a character, than there are features in a face: and the morality of that is no more determined by one part, than the beauty or deformity of this is by one single feature: each is to be judged of by all the parts or features, not taken singly, but together. In the inward frame the various passions, appetites, affections, stand in different respects to each other. The principles in our mind may be contradictory, or checks and allays only, or incentives and assistants to each other. And principles which in their nature have no kind of contrariety or affinity, may yet accidentally be each other's allays or incentives.

From hence it comes to pass, that though we were able to look into the inward contexture of the heart, and see with the greatest exactness in what degree any one principle is in a particular man; we could not from thence determine, how far that principle would go towards forming the character, or what influence it would have upon the actions, unless we could likewise discern what other principles prevailed in him, and see the proportion which that one bears to the others. Thus, though two men should have the affection of compassion in the same degree exactly; yet one may have the principle of resentment, or of ambition so strong in him, as to prevail over that of compassion, and prevent its having any influence upon his actions; so that he may deserve the character of an hard or cruel man: whereas the other, having compassion in just the same degree only, yet having resentment or

ambition in a lower degree, his compassion may prevail over them, so as to influence his actions, and to denominate his temper compassionate. So that, how strange soever it may appear to people who do not attend to the thing, yet it is quite manifest, that, when we say one man is more resenting or compassionate than another, this does not necessarily imply that one has the principle of resentment or of compassion stronger than the other. For if the proportion, which resentment or compassion bears to other inward principles, is greater in one than in the other; this is itself sufficient to denominate one more resenting or compassionate than the other.

Further, the whole system, as I may speak, of affections (including rationality) which constitute the heart, as this word is used in Scripture and on moral subjects, are each and all of them stronger in some than in others. Now the proportion which the two general affections, benevolence and self-love, bear to each other, according to this interpretation of the text, denominates men's character as to virtue. Suppose then one man to have the principle of benevolence in a higher degree than another: it will not follow from hence, that his general temper or character or actions will be more benevolent than the other's. For he may have self-love in such a degree as quite to prevail over benevolence; so that it may have no influence at all upon his actions; whereas benevolence in the other person, though in a lower degree, may yet be the strongest principle in his heart; and strong enough to be the guide of his actions, so as to denominate him a good and virtuous man. The case is here as in scales: it is not one weight, considered in itself, which determines whether the scale shall ascend or descend; but this depends upon the proportion which that one weight hath to the other.

It being thus manifest that the influence which benevolence has upon our actions, and how far it goes towards forming our character, is not determined by the degree itself of this principle in our mind; but the proportion it has to self-love and other principles: a comparison also being made in the text between self-love and the love of our neighbour; these joint considerations afforded sufficient occasion for treating here of that proportion: it plainly is implied in the precept, though it should be questioned whether it be the exact meaning of the words, as thyself.

Love of our neighbour then must bear some proportion to self-love, and virtue to be sure consists in the due proportion. What this due proportion is, whether as a principle in the mind, or as exerted in actions, can be judged of only from our nature and condition in this world. Of the degree in which affections and the principles of action, considered in themselves, prevail, we have no measure: let us then proceed to the course of behaviour, the actions they produce.

Both our nature and condition require, that each particular man should make particular provision for himself: and the inquiry, what proportion benevolence should have to self-love, when brought down to practice, will be, what is a competent care and provision for ourselves. And how certain soever it be, that each man must determine this for himself; and how ridiculous soever it would be for any to attempt to determine it for another: yet it is to be observed, that the proportion is real; and that a competent provision has a bound; and that it cannot be all which we can possibly get and keep within our grasp, without legal injustice. Mankind almost universally bring in, vanity, supplies for what is called a life of pleasure, covetousness, or imaginary notions of superiority over others, to determine this question: but every one who desires to act a proper part in society, would do well to consider, how far any of them come in to determine it, in the way of moral consideration. All that can be said is, supposing, what, as the world goes, is so much to be supposed that it is scarce to be mentioned, that persons do not neglect what they really owe to themselves; the more of their care and thought, and of their fortune they employ in doing good to their fellow-creatures, the nearer they come up to the law of perfection, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Thirdly, If the words, 'as thyself,' were to be understood of an equality of affection; it would not be attended with those consequences, which perhaps may be thought to follow from it. Suppose a person to have the same settled regard to others, as to himself; that in every deliberate scheme or pursuit he took their interest into the account in the same degree as his own, so far as an equality of affection would produce this; yet he would in fact, and ought to be, much more taken up and employed about himself, and his own

concerns, than about others, and their interests. For, besides the one common affection toward himself and his neighbour, he would have several other particular affections, passions, appetites, which he could not possibly feel in common both for himself and others: now these sensations themselves very much employ us; and have perhaps as great influence, as self-love. So far indeed as self-love, and cool reflection upon what is for our interest, would set us on work to gain a supply of our own several wants; so far the love of our neighbour would make us do the same for him: but the degree in which we are put upon seeking and making use of the means of gratification, by the feeling of those affections, appetites, and passions, must necessarily be peculiar to ourselves.

That there are particular passions (suppose shame, resentment) which men seem to have, and feel in common both for themselves and others, makes no alteration in respect to those passions and appetites which cannot possibly be thus felt in common. From hence (and perhaps more things of the like kind might be mentioned) it follows, that though there were an equality of affection to both, yet regards to ourselves would be more prevalent than attention to the concerns of others.

And from moral considerations it ought to be so, supposing still the equality of affection commanded: because we are in a peculiar manner, as I may speak, entrusted with ourselves; and therefore care of our own in terests,as well as of our conduct, particularly belongs to us.

To these things must be added, that moral obligations can extend no further than to natural possibilities. Now we have a perception of our own interests, like consciousness of our own existence, which we always carry about with us; and which, in its continuation, kind, and degree, seems impossible to be felt in respect to the interests of others.

From all these things it fully appears, that though we were to love our neighbour in the same degree as we love ourselves, so far as this is possible; yet the care of ourselves, of the individual, would not be neglected; the apprehended danger of which seems to be the only objection against understanding the precept in this strict sense.

8 III. The general temper of mind which the due love of

our neighbour would form us to, and the influence it would have upon our behaviour in life, is now to be considered.

The temper and behaviour of charity is explained at 1
large, in that known passage of St. Paul;[1] Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things. As to the meaning of the expressions, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, believeth all things; however those expressions may be explained away, this meekness, and, in some degree easiness of temper, readiness to forego our right for the sake of peace as well as in the way of compassion, freedom from mistrust, and disposition to believe well of our neighbour, this general temper, I say, accompanies and is plainly the effect of love and good-will. And, though such is the world in which we live, that experience and knowledge of it, not only may, but must beget in us greater regard to ourselves, and doubtfulness of the characters of others, than is natural to mankind; yet these ought not to be carried further than the nature and course of things make necessary. It is still true, even in the present state of things, bad as it is, that a real good man had rather be deceived, than be suspicious; had rather forego his known right, than run the venture of doing even a hard thing. This is the general temper of that charity, of which the apostle asserts, that if he had it not, giving his body to be burned would avail him nothing; and which, he says, shall never fail.

The happy influence of this temper extends to every different relation and circumstance in human life. It plainly renders a man better, more to be desired, as to all the respects and relations we can stand in to each other. The benevolent man is disposed to make use of all external advantages in such a manner, as shall contribute to the good of others, as well as to his own satisfaction. His own satisfaction consists in this. He will be easy and kind to his dependents, compassionate to the poor and distressed, friendly to all with whom he has to do. This includes the good neighbour, parent, master, magistrate; and such a behaviour would plainly make dependence, inferiority, and even servitude, easy. So that a good or charitable man of

[1] Cor. xiii.

superior rank in wisdom, fortune, authority, is a common blessing to the place he lives in; happiness grows under his influence. This good principle in inferiors would discover itself in paying respect, gratitude, obedience, as due. It were, therefore, methinks, one just way of trying one's own character, to ask ourselves, Am I in reality a better master or servant, a better friend, a better neighbour, than such and such persons; whom, perhaps, I may think not to deserve the character of virtue and religion so much as myself?

2 And as to the spirit of party, which unhappily prevails amongst mankind, whatever are the distinctions which serve for a supply to it, some or other of which have obtained in all ages and countries; one, who is thus friendly to his kind, will immediately make due allowances for it, as what cannot but be amongst such creatures as men, in such a world as this. And as wrath and fury and overbearing upon these occasions proceed, as I may speak, from men's feeling only on their own side; so a common feeling for others as well as for ourselves, would render us sensible to this truth, which it is strange can have so little influence; that we ourselves differ from others, just as much as they do from us. I put the matter in this way, because it can scarce be expected that the generality of men should see, that those things, which are made the occasions of dissension and fomenting the party spirit, are really nothing at all: but it may be expected from all people, how much soever they are in earnest about their respective peculiarities, that humanity, and common good-will to their fellow-creatures, should moderate and restrain that wretched spirit.

3 This good temper of charity likewise would prevent strife and enmity arising from other occasions: it would prevent our giving just cause of offence, and our taking it without cause. And in cases of real injury, a good man will make all allowances which are to be made; and, without any attempts of retaliation, he will only consult his own and other men's security for the future, against injustice and wrong.

4 IV. I proceed to consider lastly, what is affirmed of the precept now explained, that it comprehends in it all others; *i. e.*, that to love our neighbour as ourselves includes in it all virtues.

Now the way in which every maxim of conduct, or

general speculative assertion, when it is to be explained at large, should be treated, is, to show what are the particular truths which were designed to be comprehended under such a general observation, how far it is strictly true; and then the limitations, restrictions, and exceptions, if there be exceptions, with which it is to be understood. But it is only the former of these, namely, how far the assertion in the text holds, and the ground of the pre-eminence assigned to the precept of it, which in strictness comes into our present consideration.

However, in almost every thing that is said there is somewhat to be understood beyond what is explicitly laid down, and which we of course supply; somewhat, I mean, which would not be commonly called a restriction or limitation. Thus, when benevolence is said to be the sum of virtue, it is not spoken of as a blind propension, but as a principle in reasonable creatures, and so to be directed by their reason; for reason and reflection comes into our notion of a moral agent. And that will lead us to consider distant consequences, as well as the immediate tendency of an action; it will teach us, that the care of some persons, suppose children and families, is particularly committed to our charge by Nature and Providence; as also that there are other circumstances, suppose friendship or former obligations, which require that we do good to some, preferably to others. Reason considered merely as subservient to benevolence, as assisting to produce the greatest good, will teach us to have particular regard to these relations and circumstances; because it is plainly for the good of the world that they should be regarded. And as there are numberless cases in which, notwithstanding appearances, we are not competent judges, whether a particular action will upon the whole do good or harm; reason in the same way will teach us to be cautious how we act in these cases of uncertainty. It will suggest to our consideration, which is the safer side; how liable we are to be led wrong by passion and private interest; and what regard is due to laws, and the judgment of mankind. All these things must come into consideration, were it only in order to determine which way of acting is likely to produce the greatest good. Thus, upon supposition that it were in the strictest sense true, without limitation,

that benevolence includes in it all virtues; yet reason must come in as its guide and director, in order to attain its own end, the end of benevolence, the greatest public good. Reason then being thus included, let us now consider the truth of the assertion itself.

First, it is manifest that nothing can be of consequence to mankind or any creature, but happiness. This then is all which any person can, in strictness of speaking, be said to have a right to. We can therefore owe no man anything, but only to further and promote his happiness, according to our abilities. And therefore a disposition and endeavour to do good to all with whom we have to do, in the degree and manner which the different relations we stand in to them require, is a discharge of all the obligations we are under to them.

As human nature is not one simple uniform thing, but a composition of various parts; body, spirit, appetites, particular passions and affections; for each of which reasonable self-love would lead men to have due regard, and make suitable provision; so society consists of various parts, to which we stand in different respects and relations; and just benevolence would as surely lead us to have due regard to each of these, and behave as the respective relations require. Reasonable good-will, and right behaviour towards our fellow-creatures, are in a manner the same: only that the former expresseth the principle as it is in the mind; the latter, the principle as it were become external, *i. e.* exerted in actions.

And so far as temperance, sobriety, and moderation in sensual pleasures, and the contrary vices, have any respect to our fellow-creatures, any influence upon their quiet, welfare, and happiness; as they always have a real, and often a near influence upon it; so far it is manifest those virtues may be produced by the love of our neighbour, and that the contrary vices would be prevented by it. Indeed, if men's regard to themselves will not restrain them from excess; it may be thought little probable, that their love to others will be sufficient: but the reason is, that their love to others is not, any more than their regard to themselves, just, and in its due degree. There are however manifest instances of persons kept sober and temperate from regard to their affairs, and the welfare of those who depend upon them.

And it is obvious to every one, that habitual excess, a dissolute course of life, implies a general neglect of the duties we owe towards our friends, our families and our country.

From hence it is manifest that the common virtues, and the common vices of mankind, may be traced up to benevolence, or the want of it. And this entitles the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," to the pre-eminence given to it; and is a justification of the apostle's assertion, that all other commandments are comprehended in it; whatever cautions and restrictions[2] there are, which might

[2] For instance: As we are not competent judges, what is upon the whole, for the good of the world; there may be other immediate ends appointed us to pursue, besides that one of doing good, or producing happiness. Though the good of the creation be the only end of the author of it, yet he may have laid us under particular obligations, which we may discern and feel ourselves under, quite distinct from a perception, that the observance or violation of them is for the happiness or misery of our fellow-creatures (see Diss. ii. p. 332). And this is in fact the case. For there are certain dispositions of mind, and certain actions, which are in themselves approved or disapproved by mankind, abstracted from the consideration of their tendency to the happiness or misery of the world; approved or disapproved by reflection, by that principle within, which is the guide of life, the judge of right and wrong. Numberless instances of this kind might be mentioned. There are pieces of treachery, which in themselves appear base and detestable to every one. There are actions, which perhaps can scarce have any other general name given them than indecencies, which yet are odious and shocking to human nature. There is such a thing as meanness, a little mind; which, as it is quite distinct from incapacity, so it raises a dislike and disapprobation quite different from that contempt, which men are too apt to have, of mere folly. On the other hand; what we call greatness of mind, is the object of another sort of approbation, than superior understanding. Fidelity, honour, strict justice, are themselves approved in the highest degree, abstracted from the consideration of their tendency. Now, whether it be thought that each of these are connected with benevolence in our nature, and so may be considered as the same thing with it; or whether some of them be thought an inferior kind of virtues and vices, somewhat like natural beauties and deformities; or lastly, plain exceptions to the general rule; thus much however is certain, that the things now instanced, and numberless others, are approved or disapproved by mankind in general, in quite another view than as conducive to the happiness or misery of the world.

require to be considered, if we were to state particularly and at length, what is virtue and right behaviour in mankind. But,

2 Secondly, It might be added, that in a higher and more general way of consideration, leaving out the particular nature of creatures, and the particular circumstances in which they are placed, benevolence seems in the strictest sense to include in it all that is good and worthy; all that is good, which we have any distinct particular notion of. We have no clear conception of any positive moral attribute in the supreme Being, but what may be resolved up into goodness.[3] And, if we consider a reasonable creature or moral agent, without regard to the particular relations and circumstances in which he is placed; we cannot conceive anything else to come in towards determining whether he is to be ranked in a higher or lower class of virtuous beings, but the higher or lower degree in which that principle, and what is manifestly connected with it, prevail in him.

3 That which we more strictly call piety, or the love of God, and which is an essential part of a right temper, some may perhaps imagine no way connected with benevolence: yet surely they must be connected, if there be indeed in being an object infinitely good. Human nature is so constituted, that every good affection implies the love of itself; *i. e.* becomes the object of a new affection in the same person. Thus, to be righteous implies in it the love of righteousness; to be benevolent the love of benevolence; to be good the love of goodness; whether this righteousness, benevolence, or goodness, be viewed as in our own mind, or in another's: and the love of God as a Being perfectly good, is the love of perfect goodness contemplated in a being or person. Thus morality and religion,[4] virtue and piety, will at last necessarily coincide, run up into one and the same point, and love will be in all senses the end of the commandment.

"O almighty God, inspire us with this Divine principle;

[3] [Compare Anal. Pt. I. chap. ii. p. 39; and mark that the moral attributes of God are resolvable into goodness, only when he has viewed "without regard to particular relations." As governor, justice and veracity are distinct attributes of his, *consistent with goodness*; but not, in Butler's system, resolvable into it.]

[4] ["Morality is religion in practice, as religion is morality in principle."—*Wardlaw.*]

kill in us all the seeds of envy and ill-will; and help us, by cultivating within ourselves the love of our neighbour, to improve in the love of thee. Thou hast placed us in various kindreds, friendships, and relations, as the school of discipline for our affections: help us, by the due exercise of them, to improve to perfection; till all partial affection be lost in that entire universal one, and thou, O God, shalt be all in all."

SERMONS XIII., XIV.

UPON THE LOVE OF GOD.

[Love to God shown to be in the highest degree reasonable, from the constitution of man and the character of God (xiii.)

Love to God, as influenced in its exercise by man's present condition, and as perfected in heaven (xiv.)

Introduction.

a One extreme leads to another; enthusiasm in religion to religion without feeling.

b Love to God, a complex affection; explained.

c Summary of the argument.

I Love to God shown to be reasonable.

1 From the constitution of man.

a Affection adapted to its object; and resting in it, without exterior aim.

b No doubt, the pursuit of objects of affection is often pleasurable; but in a perfect state there will be more pleasure in possession.

c Some affections, moreover, imply approbation of them when reflected upon; as does the love of goodness. Hence the moral affection with which some objects are regarded.

2 From the character of God.

The case proved by supposing—

a A creature perfect according to his nature; (1) in goodness, (2) in wisdom and in power, who is (3) moreover, brought into intimate relations with ourselves. From our nature, we love him, revere him, and desire his approval.

b Suppose this creature our governor; and these affections are strengthened.

c Suppose him the Almighty God, and these affections are raised to the highest pitch. That he is not present to our senses can make no difference.

d Religion (it will be observed) brings into exercise no new affections; it but supplies the noblest objects to affections already possessed.

e Nor is there any contradiction between this love to God, and a regard for our own interest. Both may be exercised, independently, and at the same time.

f *One* God is the object of all the affections which love has been defined as comprehending, because though one he has different perfections.

II Love to God, as exercised in man's present condition, and as perfected in heaven.

Man's condition is imperfect; a condition of faith (not of sight), and of sin. Consider therefore—

1 The feelings appropriate to this condition:—They are Fear, Hope, and Love; and constitute the temper of Resignation. Resignation—

a How formed.

b How it influences practice.

c When it is perfected.

d How it expresses and strengthens itself through devotion.

2 The feelings appropriate to man's state of perfection in heaven.

a Love as already defined, will be perfected there.

b Men need objects of affection; and their happiness consists, not in the personal possession of such objects, but in the exercise of affections towards them.

c Such objects will be found in heaven, not in material or sensual things, but in the highest degree in God himself.

(1) As the most glorious representation of all beauty and order, he will excite our admiration:

(2) As a Being of almighty power, wisdom, and greatness, he will excite our reverence and trust:

(3) As a Being of infinite goodness, he will, in himself, be peculiarly dear:

(4) Especially when viewed in intimate relation to ourselves:

Happiness consisting in the gratification of our affections in these respects.

Summary—The whole shown to be Scriptural by quotations from the experience of inspired men.]

MATT. xxii. 37.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

EVERYBODY knows, you therefore need only just be put INTRO
in mind, that there is such a thing as having so great
horror of one extreme, as to run insensibly and of course a
into the contrary; and that a doctrine's having been a shelter for enthusiasm, or made to serve the purposes of superstition, is no proof of the falsity of it,[1] truth or right being somewhat real in itself, and so not to be judged of by its liableness to abuse, or by its supposed distance from or nearness to error. It may be sufficient to have mentioned this in general, without taking notice of the particular extravagances which have been vented under the pretence or endeavour of explaining the love of God, or how manifestly we are got into the contrary extreme, under the notion of a reasonable religion; so very reasonable, as to have nothing to do with the heart and affections, if these words signify anything but the faculty by which we discern speculative truth.

By the love of God I would understand all those regards, b
all those affections of mind which are due immediately to him from such a creature as man, and which rest in him as their end. As this does not include servile fear, so neither will any other regards, how reasonable soever, which respect anything out of or besides the perfection of the Divine nature come into consideration here. But all fear is not excluded, because his displeasure is itself the natural proper object of fear. Reverence, ambition of his love and approbation, delight in the hope or consciousness of it, come likewise into this definition of the love of God, because he is the natural object of all those affections or movements of mind, as really as he is the object of the affection, which is in the strictest sense called love; and all of them equally rest in him as their end. And they may all be understood to be implied in these words of our Saviour, without putting

[1] [See Preface to Sermons, p. 353. The theories referred to in this Introduction were advocated by Mad. Guyon and Fenelon, and opposed by Bossuet: See the History in Mackintosh's 'Progress of Ethical Philosophy,' Sec. V.]

any force upon them; for he is speaking of the love of G and our neighbour, as containing the whole of piety a virtue.

It is plain that the nature of man is so constituted as feel certain affections upon the sight or contemplation certain objects. Now the very notion of affection impli resting in its object as an end. And the particular affecti to good characters, reverence and moral love of them, natural to all those who have any degree of real goodness themselves. This will be illustrated by the description of perfect character in a creature, and by considering the ma ner in which a good man in his presence would be affecte towards such a character. He would, of course, feel th affections of love, reverence, desire of his approbatio delight in the hope or consciousness of it. And surely a this is applicable, and may be brought up to that Being wh is infinitely more than an adequate object of all those affe tions; whom we are commanded to love with all our hear with all our soul, and with all our mind. And of thes regards towards Almighty God, some are more particularl suitable to and becoming so imperfect a creature as man, i this mortal state we are passing through; and some of them and perhaps other exercises of the mind, will be the employ ment and happiness of good men in a state of perfection.

This is a general view of what the following discourse wil contain. And it is manifest the subject is a real one; there is nothing in it enthusiastical or unreasonable. And if it be indeed at all a subject, it is one of the utmost importance.

As mankind have a faculty by which they discern specula- tive truth, so we have various affections towards external objects, understanding and temper, reason and affection, are as distinct ideas as reason and hunger; and one would think could no more be confounded. It is by reason that we get the ideas of several objects of our affections; but in these cases reason and affection are no more the same, than sight of a particular object, and the pleasure or uneasiness conse- quent thereupon, are the same. Now, as reason tends to and rests in the discernment of truth, the object of it, so the very nature of affection consists in tending towards, and resting in its objects as an end. We do indeed often in common language say that things are loved, desired,

esteemed, not for themselves, but for somewhat further, somewhat out of and beyond them; yet, in these cases, whoever will attend will see that these things are not in reality the objects of the affections, *i. e.* are not loved, desired, esteemed, but the somewhat further and beyond them. If we have no affections which rest in what are called their objects, then what is called affection, love, desire, hope, in human nature, is only an uneasiness in being at rest—an unquiet disposition to action, progress, pursuit, without end or meaning. But if there be any such thing as delight in the company of one person, rather than of another; whether in the way of friendship, or mirth and entertainment, it is all one, if it be without respect to fortune, honour, or increasing our stores of knowledge, or anything beyond the present time; here is an instance of an affection absolutely resting in its object as its end, and being gratified in the same way as the appetite of hunger is satisfied with food. Yet nothing is more common than to hear it asked, what advantage a man hath in such a course, suppose of study, particular friendships, or in any other; nothing, I say, is more common than to hear such a question put in a way which supposes no gain, advantage or interest, but as a means to somewhat further: and if so, then there is no such thing at all as real interest, gain or advantage. This is the same absurdity with respect to life as an infinite series of effects without a cause is in speculation. The gain, advantage or interest consists in the delight itself, arising from such a faculty's having its object; neither is there any such thing as happiness or enjoyment, but what arises from hence. The pleasures of hope and of reflection are not exceptions; the former being only this happiness anticipated, the latter the same happiness enjoyed over again after its time. And even the general expectation of future happiness can afford satisfaction, only as it is a present object to the principle of self-love.

It was doubtless intended that life should be very much a pursuit to the gross of mankind. But this is carried so much further than is reasonable, that what gives immediate satisfaction, *i. e.* our present interest, is scarce considered as our interest at all. It is inventions which have only a remote tendency towards enjoyment, perhaps but a remote tendency

towards gaining the means only of enjoyment, which are chiefly spoken of as useful to the world. And though this way of thinking were just with respect to the imperfect state we are now in, where we know so little of satisfaction without satiety, yet it must be guarded against when we are considering the happiness of a state of perfection; which happiness being enjoyment and not hope, must necessarily consist in this, that our affections have their objects, and rest in those objects as an end, *i. e.* be satisfied with them. This will further appear in the sequel of this discourse.

Of the several affections or inward sensations which particular objects excite in man, there are some, the having of which implies the love of them when they are reflected upon.[2] This cannot be said of all our affections, principles, and motives of action. It were ridiculous to assert that a man upon reflection hath the same kind of approbation of the appetite of hunger, or the passion of fear, as he hath of good will to his fellow-creatures. To be a just, a good, a righteous man, plainly carries with it a peculiar affection to, or love of justice, goodness, righteousness, when these principles are the objects of contemplation. Now if a man approves of, or hath an affection to any principle in and for itself, incidental things allowed for, it will be the same whether he views it in his own mind or in another; in himself, or in his neighbour. This is the account of our approbation of our moral love and affection to good characters, which cannot but be in those who have any degrees of real goodness in themselves, and who discern and take notice of the same principle in others.

From observation of what passes within ourselves, our own actions, and the behaviour of others, the mind may carry on its reflections as far as it pleases; much beyond what we experience in ourselves, or discern in our fellow-creatures. It may go on, and consider goodness as become

[2] St. Austin observes, Amor ipse ordinate amandus est, quo bene amatur quod amandum est, ut sit in nobis virtus, quâ vivitur bene, *i. e.*, "The affection which we rightly have for what is lovely, must ordinate justly, in due manner, and proportion, become the object of a new affection, or be itself beloved, in order to our being endued with that virtue which is the principle of a good life." Civ Dei. L. 15. c 22.

a uniform continued principle of action, as conducted by reason, and forming a temper and character absolutely good and perfect, which is in a higher sense excellent, and proportionably the object of love and approbation.

Let us then suppose a creature perfect according to his created nature: let his form be human, and his capacities no more than equal to those of the chief of men. Goodness shall be his proper character, with wisdom to direct it, and power within some certain determined sphere of action to exert it; but goodness must be the simple actuating principle within him, this being the moral quality which is amiable, or the immediate object of love as distinct from other affections of approbation. Here, then, is a finite object for our mind to tend towards, to exercise itself upon; a creature perfect according to his capacity, fixed, steady, equally unmoved by weak pity or more weak fury and resentment; forming the justest scheme of conduct; going on undisturbed in the execution of it through the several methods of severity and reward, towards his end, namely, the general happiness of all with whom he hath to do, as in itself right and valuable. This character, though uniform in itself, in its principle, yet exerting itself in different ways, or considered in different views, may, by its appearing variety, move different affections. Thus, the severity of justice would not affect us in the same way as an act of mercy. The adventitious qualities of wisdom and power may be considered in themselves, and even the strength of mind which this immovable goodness supposes, may likewise be viewed as an object of contemplation distinct from the goodness itself. Superior excellence of any kind, as well as superior wisdom and power, is the object of awe and reverence to all creatures whatever their moral character be; but, so far as creatures of the lowest rank were good, so far the view of this character, as simply good, must appear amiable to them, be the object of or beget love. Further, suppose we were conscious that this superior person so far approved of us that we had nothing servilely to fear from him, that he was really our friend, and kind and good to us in particular, as he had occasional intercourse with us, we must be other creatures than we are, or we could not but feel the same kind of satisfaction and enjoyment (whatever would be the degree of it)

from this higher acquaintance and friendship as we feel from common ones, the intercourse being real, and the persons equally present, in both cases. We should have a more ardent desire to be approved by his better judgment, and a satisfaction in that approbation of the same sort with what would be felt in respect to common persons, or be wrought in us by their presence.

Let us now raise the character, and suppose this creature, for we are still going on with the supposition of a creature, b our proper guardian and governor; that we were in a progress of being towards somewhat further, and that his scheme of government was too fast for our capacities to comprehend, remembering still that he is perfectly good and our friend as well as our governor. Wisdom, power, goodness, accidentally viewed anywhere, would inspire reverence, awe, love; and as these affections would be raised in higher or lower degrees, in proportion as we had occasionally more or less intercourse with the creature endued with those qualities, so this further consideration and knowledge that he was our proper guardian and governor, would much more bring these objects and qualities home to ourselves, teach us they had a greater respect to us in particular, that we had a higher interest in that wisdom and power and goodness. We should with joy, gratitude, reverence, love, trust, and dependence, appropriate the character as what we had a right in, and make our boast in such our relation to it; and the conclusion of the whole would be that we should refer ourselves implicitly to him, and cast ourselves entirely upon him. As the whole attention of life should be to obey his commands, so the highest enjoyment of it must arise from the contemplation of this character, and our relation to it, from a consciousness of his favour and approbation, and from the exercise of those affections towards him which could not but be raised from his presence. A being who has these attributes, who stands in this relation, and is thus sensibly present to the mind, must necessarily be the object of these affections; there is as real a correspondence between them as between the lowest appetite of sense and its object.

That this being is not a creature, but the Almighty God, c that he is of infinite power and wisdom and goodness, does

not render him less the object of reverence and love than he would be if he had those attributes only in a limited degree. The Being who made us, and upon whom we entirely depend, is the object of some regards. He hath given us certain affections of mind which correspond to wisdom, power, goodness, *i. e.*, which are raised upon view of those qualities. If then he be really wise, powerful, good, he is the natural object of those affections which he hath endued us with, and which correspond to those attributes. That he is infinite in power, perfect in wisdom and goodness, makes no alteration, but only that he is the object of those affections raised to the highest pitch. He is not indeed to be discerned by any of our senses. "I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him,—Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!"[3] But is He then afar off? Does he not fill heaven and earth with his presence? The presence of our fellow-creatures affects our senses, and our senses give us the knowledge of their presence, which hath different kinds of influence upon us—love, joy, sorrow, restraint, encouragement, reverence—however, this influence is not immediately from our senses, but from that knowledge. Thus suppose a person neither to see nor hear another, not to know by any of his senses, but yet certainly to know, that another was with him, this knowledge might, and in many cases would, have one or more of the effects before mentioned; it is, therefore, not only reasonable, but also natural, to be affected with a presence though it be not the object of our senses. Whether it be, or be not, is merely an accidental circumstance, which needs not come into consideration; it is the certainty that he is with us, and we with him, which hath the influence. We consider persons then as present, not only when they are within reach of our senses, but also when we are assured by any other means that they are within such a nearness; nay, if they are not, we can recall them to our mind, and be moved towards them at present; and must He, who is so much more intimately with us, that "in him we live and move and have our being,'

[3] Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9.

be thought too distant to be the object of our affections? We own and feel the force of amiable and worthy qualities in our fellow-creatures, and can we be insensible to the contemplation of perfect goodness? Do we reverence the shadows of greatness here below? are we solicitous about honour and esteem and the opinion of the world? And shall we not feel the same with respect to him whose are wisdom and power in the original, who "is the God of judgment by whom actions are weighed?" Thus love, reverence, desire of esteem, every faculty, every affection, tends towards, and is employed about its respective object in common cases; and must the exercise of them be suspended with regard to him alone who is an object, an infinitely more than adequate object, to our most exalted faculties; him, "of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things?"

As we cannot remove from this earth, or change our general business on it, so neither can we alter our real na-
1 ture; therefore, no exercise of the mind can be recommended, but only the exercise of those faculties you are conscious of. Religion does not demand new affections, but only claims the direction of those you already have, those affections you daily feel, though unhappily confined to objects not altogether unsuitable, but altogether unequal to them. We only represent to you the higher, the adequate objects of those very faculties and affections. Let the man of ambition go on still to consider disgrace as the greatest evil—honour, as his chief good. But disgrace! in whose estimation? Honour! in whose judgment? This is the only question. If shame, and delight in esteem be spoken of as real, as any settled ground of pain or pleasure, both these must be in proportion to the supposed wisdom and worth of him by whom we are contemned or esteemed. Must it then be thought enthusiastical to speak of a sensibility of this sort which shall have respect to an unerring judgment, to infinite wisdom, when we are assured this unerring judgment, this infinite wisdom, does observe upon our actions?

2 It is the same with respect to the love of God in the strictest and most confined sense. We only offer and represent the highest object of an affection supposed already in your mind. Some degree of goodness must be previously supposed; this always implies the love of itself, an affection

to goodness; the highest, the adequate object of this affection, is perfect goodness, which, therefore, we are to love with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. "Must we, then, forgetting our own interest, as it were, go out of ourselves, and love God for his own sake?" No more forget your own interest, no more go out of yourselves than when you prefer one place, one prospect, the conversation of one man to that of another. Does not every affection necessarily imply that the object of it be itself loved? If it be not, it is not the object of the affection. You may, and ought if you can, but it is a great mistake to think you can love or fear or hate anything from consideration that such love or fear or hatred may be a means of obtaining good or avoiding evil; but the question whether we ought to love God for his sake, or for our own, being a mere mistake in language, the real question, which this is mistaken for, will, I suppose, be answered by observing that the goodness of God already exercised towards us, our present dependence upon him, and our expectation of future benefits, ought, and have a natural tendency, to beget in us the affection of gratitude, and greater love towards him, than the same goodness exercised towards others, were it only for this reason that every affection is moved in proportion to the sense we have of the object of it, and we cannot but have a more lively sense of goodness, when exercised towards ourselves, than when exercised towards others. I added expectation of future benefits, because the ground of that expectation is present goodness.

Thus Almighty God is the natural object of the several affections—love, reverence, fear, desire of approbation; for though he is simply one, yet we cannot but consider him in partial and different views. He is in himself one uniform Being, and for ever the same, without variableness or shadow of turning; but his infinite greatness, his goodness, his wisdom, are different objects to our mind. To which is to be added, that, from the changes in our own characters, together with his unchangeableness, we cannot but consider ourselves as more or less the objects of his approbation and really be so, for if he approves what is good he cannot, merely from the unchangeableness of his nature, approve what is evil. Hence must arise more various movements of

mind, more different kinds of affections; and this greater variety also is just and reasonable in such creatures as we are, though it respects a Being simply one good and perfect. As some of these affections are most particularly suitable to so imperfect a creature as man, in this mortal state we are passing through, so there may be other exercises of mind, or some of these in higher degrees, our employment and happiness in a state of perfection.

XIV.

Consider then our ignorance, the imperfection of our nature, our virtue, and our condition in this world, with respect to an infinitely good and just Being, our Creator and Governor, and you will see what religious affections of mind are most particularly suitable to this mortal state we are passing through.

Though we are not affected with anything so strongly as what we discern with our senses, and though our nature and condition require that we be much taken up about sensible things, yet our reason convinces us that God is present with us, and we see and feel the effects of his goodness; he is, therefore, the object of some regards. The imperfection of our virtue, joined with the consideration of his absolute rectitude or holiness, will scarce permit that perfection of love which entirely casts out all fear; yet goodness is the object of love to all creatures who have any degree of it themselves, and consciousness of a real endeavour to approve ourselves to him, joined with the consideration of his goodness, as it quite excludes servile dread and horror, so it is plainly a reasonable ground for hope of his favour. Neither fear, nor hope, nor love then are excluded, and one or another of these will prevail, according to the different views we have of God, and ought to prevail according to the changes we find in our own character. There is a temper of mind made up of, or which follows from all three—fear, hope, love, namely, resignation to the Divine will, which is the general temper belonging to this state, which ought to be the habitual frame of our mind and heart, and to be exercised at proper seasons more distinctly in acts of devotion.

Resignation to the will of God is the whole of piety; it

includes in it all that is good, and is a source of the most settled quiet and composure of mind. There is the general principle of submission in our nature. Man is not so constituted as to desire things, and be uneasy in the want of them, in proportion to their known value; many other considerations come in to determine the degrees of desire, particularly whether the advantage we take view of be within the sphere of our rank. Who ever felt uneasiness a
upon observing any of the advantages brute creatures have over us? and yet it is plain they have several. It is the same with respect to advantages belonging to creatures of a superior order; thus, though we see a thing to be highly valuable, yet that it does not belong to our condition of being is sufficient to suspend our desires after it, to make us rest satisfied without such advantage. Now there is just the same reason for quiet resignation in the want of everything equally unattainable and out of our reach in particular, though others of our species be possessed of it. All this may be applied to the whole of life, to positive inconveniences as well as wants; not indeed to the sensations of pain and sorrow, but to all the uneasinesses of reflection, murmuring, and discontent. This is human nature formed to compliance, yielding, submission of temper. We find the principles of it within us, and every one exercises it towards some objects or other, *i. e.*, feels it with regard to some persons and some circumstances. Now this is an excellent foundation of a reasonable and religious resignation. Nature teaches and inclines us to take up with our lot; the consideration that the course of things is unalterable hath a tendency to quiet the mind under it, to beget a submission of temper to it; but when we can add that this unalterable course is appointed and continued by Infinite wisdom and goodness, how absolute should be our submission, how entire our trust and dependence?

This would reconcile us to our condition, prevent all the su- b
pernumerary troubles arising from imagination, distant fears, impatience; all uneasiness, except that which necessarily arises from the calamities themselves we may be under. How many of our cares should we by this means be disburdened of? Cares not properly our own, how apt soever they may be to intrude upon us and we to admit them the anxieties

of expectation, solicitude about success and disappointment, which, in truth, are none of our concern. How open to every gratification would that mind be which was clear of these incumbrances?

Our resignation to the will of God may be said to be perfect when our will is lost and resolved up into His; when we rest in his will as our end, as being itself most just, and right, and good; and where is the impossibility of such an affection to what is just, and right, and good, such a loyalty of heart to the Governor of the Universe as shall prevail over all sinister indirect desires of our own? Neither is this at bottom anything more than faith, and honesty, and fairness of mind, in a more enlarged sense, indeed, than those words are commonly used; and as, in common cases, fear and hope and other passions are raised in us by their respective objects, so this submission of heart and soul and mind, this religious resignation, would be as naturally produced by our having just conceptions of Almighty God and a real sense of his presence with us. In how low a degree soever this temper usually prevails amongst men, yet it is a temper right in itself; it is what we owe to our Creator, it is particularly suitable to our mortal condition, and to what we should endeavour after for our own sakes in our passage through such a world as this, where is nothing upon which we can rest or depend, nothing but what we are liable to be deceived and disappointed in. Thus we might acquaint ourselves with God and be at peace. This is piety and religion in the strictest sense, considered as a habit of mind, an habitual sense of God's presence with us, being affected towards him, as present, in the manner his superior nature requires from such a creature as man. This is to walk with God.

Little more need be said of devotion or religious worship than that it is this temper exerted into act. The nature of it consists in the actual exercise of those affections towards God which are supposed habitual in good men. He is always equally present with us, but we are so much taken up with sensible things that, "Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not."[1] Devo-

[1] Job ix. 11.

tion is retirement from the world he has made to him alone; it is to withdraw from the avocations of sense, to employ our attention wholly upon him as upon an object actually present, to yield ourselves up to the influence of the Divine Presence, and to give full scope to the affections of gratitude, love, reverence, trust, and dependence, of which Infinite power, wisdom, and goodness is the natural and only adequate object. We may apply to the whole of devotion those words of the son of Sirach, "When you glorify the Lord exalt him as much as you can, for even yet will he far exceed; and when you exalt him put forth all your strength and be not weary, for you can never go far enough."[2] Our most raised affections of every kind cannot but fall short and be disproportionate when an infinite Being is the object of them. This is the highest exercise and employment of mind that a creature is capable of. As this divine service and worship is itself absolutely due to God, so also is it necessary, in order to a further end, to keep alive upon our minds a sense of his authority, a sense that in our ordinary behaviour amongst men we act under him as our Governor and Judge.

Thus you see the temper of mind respecting God, which is particularly suitable to a state of imperfection, to creatures in a progress of being towards somewhat further.

Suppose now this something further attained, that we 2
were arrived at it; what a perception will it be to see and know and feel that our trust was not vain, our dependence not groundless? That the issue, event, and consummation came out such as fully to justify and answer that resignation? If the obscure view of the Divine perfection which we have in this world ought in just consequence to beget an entire resignation, what will this resignation be exalted into when we shall see face to face and know as we are known? If we cannot form any distinct notion of that perfection of the love of God which casts out all fear, of that enjoyment of him which will be the happiness of good men hereafter, the consideration of our wants and capacities of happiness, and that he will be an adequate supply to them, must serve us instead of such distinct conception of the particular happiness itself.

[2] Ecclus. xliii. 30

Let us, then, suppose a man entirely disengaged from business and pleasure, sitting down alone and at leisure, to
b reflect upon himself and his own condition of being. He would immediately feel that he was by no means complete of himself, but totally insufficient for his own happiness. One may venture to affirm that every man hath felt this whether he hath again reflected upon it or not. It is feeling this deficiency that they are unsatisfied with themselves which makes men look out for assistance from abroad, and which has given rise to various kinds of amusements altogether needless any otherwise than as they serve to fill up the blank spaces of time, and so hinder their feeling this deficiency and being uneasy with themselves. Now, if these external things we take up with were really an adequate supply to this deficiency of human nature, if by their means our capacities and desires were all satisfied and filled up, then it might be truly said that we had found out the proper happiness of man, and so might sit down satisfied and be at rest in the enjoyment of it; but if it appears that the amusements which men usually pass their time in are so far from coming up to, or answering our notions and desires of happiness or good, that they are really no more than what they are commonly called, somewhat to pass away the time, *i. e.*, somewhat which serves to turn us aside from and prevent our attending to this our internal poverty and want; if they serve only, or chiefly to suspend, instead of satisfying our conceptions and desires of happiness; if the want remains, and we have found out little more than barely the means of making it less sensible, then are we still to seek for somewhat to be an adequate supply to it. It is plain that there is a capacity in the nature of man which neither riches, nor honours, nor sensual gratifications, nor anything in this world can perfectly fill up or satisfy, there is a deeper and more essential want than any of these things can be the supply of; yet surely there is a possibility of somewhat which may fill up our capacities of happiness; somewhat in which our souls may find rest: somewhat which may be to us that satisfactory good we are inquiring after, but it cannot be anything which is valuable only as it tends to some further end. Those, therefore, who have got this world so much into their hearts as not to be able to consider

happiness as consisting in anything but property and possessions, which are only valuable as the means to somewhat else, cannot have the least glimpse of the subject before us, which is the end, not the means, the thing itself, not somewhat in order to it; but if you can lay aside that general, confused, undeterminate notion of happiness, as consisting in such possessions, and fix in your thoughts that it really can consist in nothing but in a faculty's having its proper object, you will clearly see that, in the coolest way of consideration, without either the heat of fanciful enthusiasm or the warmth of real devotion, nothing is more certain than that an infinite Being may himself be, if he pleases, the supply to all the capacities of our nature. All the common enjoyments of life are from the faculties he hath endued us with, and the objects he hath made suitable to them. He may himself be to us infinitely more than all these; he may be to us all that we want. As our understanding can contemplate itself, and our affections be exercised upon themselves by reflection, so may each be employed in the same manner upon any other mind; and since the Supreme Mind, the Author and Cause of all things, is the highest possible object to himself, he may be an adequate supply to all the faculties of our souls, a subject to our understanding, and an object to our affections.

Consider, then, when we shall have put off this mortal body, when we shall be divested of sensual appetites, and those possessions which are now the means of gratification shall be of no avail; when this restless scene of business and vain pleasures which now diverts us from ourselves shall be all over, we, our proper self, shall still remain; we shall still continue the same creatures we are, with wants to be supplied and capacities of happiness. We must have faculties of perception, though not sensitive ones, and pleasure or uneasiness from our perceptions, as now we have.

There are certain ideas which we express by the words order, harmony, proportion, beauty, the furthest removed from anything sensual. Now what is there in those intellectual images, forms, or ideas which begets that approbation, love, delight, and even rapture, which is seen in some person's faces upon having those objects present to their minds?—"Mere enthusiasm!" Be it what it will, there are

objects, works of nature and of art, which all mankind have delight from, quite distinct from their affording gratification to sensual appetites, and from quite another view of them, than as being for their interest and further advantage. The faculties from which we are capable of these pleasures, and the pleasures themselves, are as natural, and as much to be accounted for, as any sensual appetite whatever and the pleasure from its gratification. Words, to be sure, are wanting upon this subject: to say that everything of grace and beauty throughout the whole of Nature, everything excellent and amiable shared in differently lower degrees by the whole creation, meet in the Author and Cause of all things; this is an inadequate, and perhaps improper way, of speaking of the Divine Nature, but it is manifest that absolute rectitude, the perfection of being, must be in all senses and in every respect the highest object to the mind.

(2) In this world it is only the effects of wisdom and power and greatness which we discern; it is not impossible that hereafter the qualities themselves in the Supreme Being may be the immediate object of contemplation. What amazing wonders are opened to view by late improvements! What an object is the universe to a creature, if there be a creature who can comprehend its system! But it must be an infinitely higher exercise of the understanding to view the scheme of it in that Mind which projected it before its foundations were laid; and surely we have meaning to the words when we speak of going further, and viewing, not only this system in his mind, but the wisdom and intelligence itself from whence it proceeded. The same may be said of power; but since wisdom and power are not God, he is a wise, a powerful Being; the Divine nature may, therefore, be a further object to the understanding. It is nothing to observe that our senses give us but an imperfect knowledge of things; effects themselves, if we know them thoroughly, would give us but imperfect notions of wisdom and power, much less of his being, in whom they reside. I am not speaking of any fanciful notion of seeing all things in God, but only representing to you how much a higher object to the understanding an infinite Being himself is than the things which he has made, and this is no more than saying that the Creator is superior to the works of his hands.

This may be illustrated by a low example: suppose a machine, the sight of which would raise, and discoveries in its contrivance gratify, our curiosity, the real delight, in this case, would arise from its being the effect of skill and contrivance. This skill in the mind of the artificer would be a higher object if we had any senses or ways to discern it; for, observe, the contemplation of that principle, faculty, or power which produced any effect must be a higher exercise of the understanding than the contemplation of the effect itself. The cause must be a higher object to the mind than the effect.

But whoever considers distinctly what the delight of knowledge is, will see reason to be satisfied that it cannot be the chief good of man; all this, as it is applicable, so it was mentioned with regard to the attribute of goodness. (3
I say, goodness; our being and all our enjoyments are the effects of it. Just men bear its resemblance, but how little do we know of the original, of what it is in itself? Recall what was before observed concerning the affection to moral characters, which, in how low a degree soever, yet is plainly natural to man and the most excellent part of his nature. Suppose this improved, as it may be improved to any degree whatever, in the spirits of just men made perfect, and then suppose that they had a real view of that righteousness which is an everlasting righteousness; of the conformity of the Divine will to the law of truth, in which the moral attributes of God consist; of that goodness in the sovereign mind which gave birth to the universe: add, what will be true of all good men hereafter, a consciousness of having an interest in what they are contemplating. Suppose them able to say, "This God is our God for ever and ever," would they be any longer to seek for what was their chief happiness, their final good? Could the utmost stretch of their capacities look further? Would not infinite perfect goodness be their very end, the last end and object of their affections, beyond which they could neither have nor desire, beyond which they could not form a wish or thought?

Consider wherein that presence of a friend consists, which (4
has often so strong an effect, as wholly to possess the mind, and entirely suspend all other affections and regards; and which itself affords the highest satisfaction and enjoyment.

He is within reach of the senses. Now, as our capacities of perception improve, we shall have, perhaps by some faculty entirely new, a perception of God's presence with us in a nearer and stricter way; since it is certain he is more intimately present with us, than anything else can be. Proof of the existence and presence of any being is quite different from the immediate perception, the consciousness of it. What then will be the joy of heart, which his presence, and the light of his countenance, who is the life of the universe, will inspire good men with, when they shall have a sensation, that he is the Sustainer of their being, that they exist in him; when they shall feel his influence to cheer and enliven and support their frame, in a manner of which we have now no conception? He will be in a literal sense their strength and their portion for ever.

When we speak of things so much above our comprehension, as the employment and happiness of a future state, doubtless it behoves us to speak with all modesty and distrust of ourselves. But the Scripture represents the happiness of that state under the notions of seeing God, seeing him as he is, knowing as we are known, and seeing face to face. These words are not general or undetermined, but express a particular determinate happiness. And I will be bold to say, that nothing can account for, or come up to these expressions, but only this, that God himself will be an object to our faculties, that he himself will be our happiness; as distinguished from the enjoyments of the present state, which seem to arise, not immediately from him, but from the objects he has adapted to give us delight.

Summ. To conclude: Let us suppose a person tired with care and sorrow and the repetition of vain delights which fill up the round of life; sensible that everything here below in its best estate is altogether vanity. Suppose him to feel that deficiency of human nature, before taken notice of; and to be convinced that God alone was the adequate supply to it, What could be more applicable to a good man, in this state of mind; or better express his present wants and distant hopes, his passage through this world as a progress towards a state of perfection, than the following passages in the devotions of the royal prophet? They are plainly in a higher and more proper sense applicable to this, than they

could be to anything else. "I have seen an end of all perfection. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before him? How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! and the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of thy house: and thou shalt give them drink of thy pleasures, as out of the river. For with thee is the well of life: and in thy light shall we see light. Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and receivest unto thee: he shall dwell in thy court, and shall be satisfied with the pleasures of thy house, even of thy holy temple. Blessed is the people, O Lord, that can rejoice in thee: they shall walk in the light of thy countenance. Their delight shall be daily in thy name, and in thy righteousness shall they make their boast. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy loving-kindness they shall be exalted. As for me, I will behold thy presence in righteousness; and when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it. Thou shalt show me the path of life; in thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore."

SERMON XV.[1]

UPON THE IGNORANCE OF MAN.

ECCLES. viii. 16, 17.

When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the

[1] [One of the most impressive examples of Butler's wisdom. Many of the thoughts given here are expanded in the Analogy.]

sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.

THE writings of Solomon are very much taken up with reflections upon human nature, and human life; to which he hath added, in this book, reflections upon the constitution of things. And it is not improbable, that the little satisfaction, and the great difficulties he met with in his researches into the general constitution of Nature, might be the occasion of his confining himself, so much as he hath done, to life and conduct. However, upon that joint review he expresses great ignorance of the works of God, and the method of his providence in the government of the world; great labour and weariness in the search and observation he had employed himself about: and great disappointment, pain, and even vexation of mind, upon that which he had remarked of the appearances of things, and of what was going forward upon this earth. This whole review and inspection, and the result of it, sorrow, perplexity, a sense of his necessary ignorance, suggests various reflections to his mind. But, notwithstanding all this ignorance and dissatisfaction, there is somewhat upon which he assuredly rests and depends, somewhat, which is the conclusion of the whole matter, and the only concern of man. Following this his method and train of reflection, let us consider,

I. The assertion of the text, the ignorance of man; that the wisest and most knowing cannot comprehend the ways and works of God: and then,

II. What are the just consequences of this observation and knowledge of our own ignorance, and the reflections which it leads us to.

I. The wisest and most knowing cannot comprehend the works of God, the methods and designs of his providence in the creation and government of the world.

Creation is absolutely and entirely out of our depth, and beyond the extent of our utmost reach. And yet it is as certain that God made the world, as it is certain that effects must have a cause. It is indeed in general no more than effects, that the most knowing are acquainted with: for as to causes, they are as entirely in the dark as the most ignorant. What are the laws by which matter acts upon matter,

but certain effects; which some, having observed to be frequently repeated, have reduced to general rules?[a] The real nature and essence of beings likewise is what we are altogether ignorant of. All these things are so entirely out of our reach, that we have not the least glimpse of them. And we know little more of ourselves, than we do of the world about us: how we were made, how our being is continued and preserved, what the faculties of our minds are, and upon what the power of exercising them depends. "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." Our own nature, and the objects we are surrounded with, serve to raise our curiosity; but we are quite out of a condition of satisfying it. Every secret which is disclosed, every discovery which is made, every new effect which is brought to view, serves to convince us of numberless more which remain concealed, and which we had before no suspicion of. And what if we were acquainted with the whole creation, in the same way and as thoroughly as we are with any single object in it? What would all this natural knowledge amount to? it must be a low curiosity indeed which such superficial knowledge could satisfy. On the contrary, would it not serve to convince us of our ignorance still; and to raise our desire of knowing the nature of things themselves, the author, the cause, and the end of them?

As to the government of the world: though from consideration of the final causes which come within our knowledge; of characters, personal merit and demerit; of the favour and disapprobation, which respectively are due and belong to the righteous and the wicked, and which therefore must necessarily be in a mind which sees things as they really are; though I say, from hence we may know somewhat concerning the designs of Providence in the government of the world, enough to enforce upon us religion and the practice of virtue: yet, since the monarchy of the universe is a dominion unlimited in extent, and everlasting in duration; the general system of it must necessarily be quite beyond our comprehension. And, since there appears such a subor-

[a] [This sentence contains an accurate definition of Law, as used in natural science. It is no force or power, but simply a generalized fact.]

dination and reference of the several parts to each other, as to constitute it properly one administration or government; we cannot have a thorough knowledge of any part, without knowing the whole. This surely should convince us, that we are much less competent judges of the very small part which comes under our notice in this world, than we are apt to imagine. "No heart can think upon these things worthily; and who is able to conceive his way? it is a tempest which no man can see: for the most part of his works are hid. Who can declare the works of his justice? for his covenant is afar off, and the trial of all things is in the end:" *i. e.* the dealings of God with the children of men are not yet completed, and cannot be judged of by that part which is before us. "So that a man cannot say, this is worse than that: for in time they shall be well approved. Thy faithfulness, O Lord, reacheth unto the clouds: thy righteousness standeth like the strong mountains: thy judgments are like the great deep. He hath made everything beautiful in his time: Also he hath set the world in their heart; so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end." And thus St. Paul concludes a long argument upon the various dispensations of Providence: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! for who hath known the mind of the Lord?"

Thus the scheme of Providence, the ways and works of God, are too vast, of too large extent for our capacities.[3] There is, as I may speak, such an expense of power, and wisdom, and goodness in the formation and government of the world, as is too much for us to take in or comprehend. Power, and wisdom, and goodness are manifest to us in all those works of God, which come within our view: but there are likewise infinite stores of each, poured forth throughout the immensity of the creation; no part of which can be thoroughly understood, without taking in its reference and respect to the whole: and this is what we have not faculties for.

And as the works of God, and his scheme of government,

[3] [See Anal. Pt. I. chap. vii., and Pt. II. chap. iv.]

are above our capacities thoroughly to comprehend: so there possibly may be reasons which originally made it fit that many things should be concealed from us, which we have perhaps natural capacities of understanding: many things concerning the designs, methods and ends of Divine Providence in the government of the world. There is no manner of absurdity in supposing a veil, on purpose drawn over some scenes of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the sight of which might some way or other strike us too strongly; or that better ends are designed and served by their being concealed, than could be by their being exposed to our knowledge. The Almighty may cast clouds and darkness round about him, for reasons and purposes of which we have not the least glimpse or conception.

However, it is surely reasonable, and what might have been expected, that creatures in some stage of their being, suppose in the infancy of it,[4] should be placed in a state of discipline and improvement, where their patience and submission is to be tried by afflictions, where temptations are to be resisted, and difficulties gone through in the discharge of their duty. Now if the greatest pleasures and pains of the present life may be overcome and suspended, as they manifestly may, by hope and fear, and other passions and affections; then the evidence of religion,[5] and the sense of the consequences of virtue and vice, might have been such as entirely in all cases to prevail over those afflictions, difficulties and temptations; prevail over them, so as to render them absolutely none at all. But the very notion itself now mentioned, of a state of discipline and improvement, necessarily excludes such sensible evidence and conviction of religion, and of the consequences of virtue and vice. Religion consists in submission and resignation to the Divine will.[6] Our condition in this world is a school of exercise for this temper:[7] and our ignorance, the shallowness of our reason, the temptations, difficulties, afflictions, which we are exposed to, all equally contribute to make it so. The general observation may be carried on, and whoever will attend to the thing will plainly see, that less sensible evidence, with less

[4] [Anal. Pt. I. chap. iv.]
[5] [Anal. Pt. II. p. 297.]
[6] [Ser. xiv.]
[7] [Anal. Pt. I. chap. iv.]

difficulty in practice, is the same, as more sensible evidence with greater difficulty in practice. Therefore difficulties in speculation as much come into the notion of a state of discipline, as difficulties in practice:[8] and so the same reason or account is to be given of both. Thus, though it is indeed absurd to talk of the greater merit of assent, upon little or no evidence, than upon demonstration; yet the strict discharge of our duty, with less sensible evidence, does imply in it a better character, than the same diligence in the discharge of it upon more sensible evidence. This fully accounts for and explains that assertion of our Saviour, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed:[9] have become Christians and obeyed the gospel, upon less sensible evidence, than that which Thomas, to whom he is speaking, insisted upon.

But after all, the same account is to be given, why we were placed in these circumstances of ignorance, as why nature has not furnished us with wings; namely, that we were designed to be inhabitants of this earth. I am afraid we think too highly of ourselves; of our rank in the creation and of what is due to us. What sphere of action, what business is assigned to man, that he has not capacities and knowledge fully equal to? It is manifest he has reason, and knowledge, and faculties superior to the business of this present world: faculties which appear superfluous, if we do not take in the respect which they have to somewhat further, and beyond it. If to acquire knowledge were our proper end, we should indeed be but poorly provided: but if somewhat else be our business and duty, we may, notwithstanding our ignorance, be well enough furnished for it; and the observation of our ignorance may be of assistance to us in the discharge of it.

II. Let us then consider, what are the consequences of this knowledge and observation of our own ignorance, and the reflection it leads to.

First, We may learn from it, with what temper of mind a man ought to inquire into the subject of religion; namely, with expectation of finding difficulties, and with a disposition to take up and rest satisfied with any evidence whatever, which is real.

[8] [Anal. Pt. II. chap. vi. p. 241.] [9] John xx. 29.

He should beforehand expect things mysterious, and such as he will not be able thoroughly to comprehend, or go to the bottom of. To expect a distinct comprehensive view of the whole subject, clear of difficulties and objections, is to forget our nature and condition; neither of which admit of such knowledge, with respect to any science whatever. And to inquire with this expectation, is not to inquire as a man, but as one of another order of creatures.

Due sense of the general ignorance of man would also beget in us a disposition to take up and rest satisfied with any evidence whatever, which is real. I mention this as the contrary to a disposition, of which there are not wanting instances, to find fault with and reject evidence, because it is not such as was desired.[10] If a man were to walk by twilight, must he not follow his eyes as much as if it were broad day and clear sunshine? Or if he were obliged to take a journey by night, would he not give heed to any light shining in the darkness, till the day should break and the day-star arise? It would not be altogether unnatural for him to reflect how much better it were to have day-light; he might perhaps have great curiosity to see the country round about him; he might lament that the darkness concealed many extended prospects from his eyes, and wish for the sun to draw away the veil; but how ridiculous would it be, to reject with scorn and disdain the guidance and direction which that lesser light might afford him, because it was not the sun itself! if the make and constitution of man, the circumstances he is placed in, or the reason of things affords the least hint or intimation, that virtue is the law he is born under; scepticism itself should lead him to the most strict and inviolable practice of it; that he may not make the dreadful experiment, of leaving the course of life marked out for him by nature, whatever that nature be, and entering paths of his own, of which he can know neither the dangers nor the end. For though no danger be seen, yet darkness, ignorance and blindness are no manner of security.

Secondly, our ignorance is the proper answer to many things which are called objections against religion,[11] particularly to those which arise from the appearances of evil and irregularity in the constitution of Nature and the government

[10] [Anal. Pt. II chap. vi.] [11] [Anal. Pt. II. chap. iv.]

of the world. In all other cases it is thought necessary to be thoroughly acquainted with the whole of the scheme, even one of so narrow a compass as those which are formed by men, in order to judge of the goodness or badness of it; and the most slight and superficial view of any human contrivance comes abundantly nearer to a thorough knowledge of it than that part which we know of the government of the world does to the general scheme and system of it, to the whole set of laws by which it is governed. From our ignorance of the constitution of things, and the scheme of providence in the government of the world; from the reference the several parts have to each other, and to the whole, and from our not being able to see the end of the whole, it follows that however perfect things are they must even necessarily appear to us otherwise less perfect than they are.[18]

[18] Suppose some very complicated piece of work, some system or constitution, formed for some general end, to which each of the parts had a reference. The perfection or justness of this work or constitution would consist in the reference and respect, which the several parts have to the general design. This reference of parts to the general design may be infinitely various, both in degree and kind. Thus one part may only contribute and be subservient to another; this to a third; and so on through a long series, the last part of which alone may contribute immediately and directly to the general design. Or a part may have this distant reference to the general design, and may also contribute immediately to it. For instance: If the general design or end, for which the complicated frame of Nature was brought into being, is happiness; whatever affords present satisfaction, and likewise tends to carry on the course of things, hath this double respect to the general design. Now suppose a spectator of that work or constitution was in a great measure ignorant of such various reference to the general end, whatever that end be; and that, upon a very slight and partial view which he had of the work, several things appeared to his eye as disproportionate and wrong; others, just and beautiful. What would he gather from these appearances? He would immediately conclude there was a probability, if he could see the whole reference of the parts appearing wrong to the general design, that this would destroy the appearance of wrongness and disproportion. But there is no probability, that the reference would destroy the particular right appearances, though that reference might show the thing

Thirdly, since the constitution of Nature, and the methods and designs of Providence in the government of the world, are above our comprehension, we should acquiesce in, and rest satisfied with, our ignorance, turn our thoughts from that which is above and beyond us, and apply ourselves to that which is level to our capacities, and which is our real business and concern. Knowledge is not our proper happiness. Whoever will in the least attend to the thing will see that it is the gaining, not the having of it, which is the entertainment of the mind; indeed, if the proper happiness of man consisted in knowledge, considered as a possession or treasure, men who are possessed of the largest share would have a very ill time of it, as they would be infinitely more sensible than others of their poverty in this respect; thus he who increases knowledge would eminently increase sorrow. Men of deep research and curious inquiry should just be put in mind not to mistake what they are doing. If their discoveries serve the cause of virtue and religion in the way of proof, motive to practice, or assistance in it, or if they tend to render life less unhappy, and promote its satisfactions, then they are most usefully employed; but bringing things to light, alone and of itself, is of no manner of use any otherwise than as an entertainment or diversion. Neither is this at all amiss if it does not take up the time which should be employed in better work; but it is evident that there is another mark set up for us to aim at, another end appointed us to direct our lives to; an end which the most knowing may fail of and the most ignorant arrive at. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for

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already appearing just, to be so likewise in a higher degree or another manner. There is a probability, that the right appearances were intended: there is no probability, that the wrong appearances were. We cannot suspect irregularity and disorder to be designed. The pillars of a building appear beautiful; but their being likewise its support does not destroy that beauty: there still remains a reason to believe that the architect intended the beautiful appearance, after we have found out the reference, support. It would be reasonable for a man of himself to think thus, upon the first piece of architecture he ever saw.

ever, that we may do all the words of this law;" which reflection of Moses, put in general terms, is, that the only knowledge which is of any avail to us is that which teaches us our duty, or assists us in the discharge of it. The economy of the universe, the course of Nature, Almighty power exerted in the creation and government of the world is out of our reach. What would be the consequence if we could really get an insight into these things is very uncertain; whether it would assist us in, or divert us from, what we have to do in this present state. If then there be a sphere of knowledge, of contemplation and employment, level to our capacities, and of the utmost importance to us, we ought surely to apply ourselves with all diligence to this our proper business, and esteem everything else nothing, nothing as to us in comparison of it. Thus Job, discoursing of natural knowledge, how much it is above us, and of wisdom in general, says, "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." Other orders of creatures may perhaps be let into the secret counsels of heaven, and have the designs and methods of Providence, in the creation and government of the world, communicated to them; but this does not belong to our rank or condition. "The fear of the Lord, and to depart from evil," is the only wisdom which man should aspire after as his work and business. The same is said, and with the same connexion and context, in the conclusion of the book of Ecclesiastes. Our ignorance, and the little we can know of other things, affords a reason why we should not perplex ourselves about them; but no way invalidates that which is the "conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." So that Socrates was not the first who endeavoured to draw men off from labouring after, and laying stress upon other knowledge, in comparison of that which related to morals. Our province is virtue and religion, life and manners; the science of improving the temper, and making the heart better. This is the field assigned us to cultivate: how much it has lain neglected is indeed astonishing. Virtue is demonstrably the happiness of man; it consists in good actions, proceeding from a good

principle, temper, or heart. Overt acts are entirely in our power. What remains is, that we learn to keep our heart, to govern and regulate our passions, mind, affections, that so we may be free from the impotencies of fear, envy, malice, covetousness, ambition; that we may be clear of these, considered as vices seated in the heart—considered as constituting a general wrong temper, from which general wrong frame of mind all the mistaken pursuits, and far the greatest part of the unhappiness of life, proceed. He who should find out one rule to assist us in this work would deserve infinitely better of mankind than all the improvers of other knowledge put together.

Lastly, let us adore that Infinite wisdom and power and goodness which is above our comprehension. "To whom hath the root of wisdom been revealed? Or who hath known her wise counsels? There is one wise and greatly to be feared, the Lord sitting upon his throne. He created her, and saw her, and numbered her, and poured out upon her all his works." If it be thought a considerable thing to be acquainted with a few, a very few, of the effects of Infinite power and wisdom; the situation, bigness, and revolution of some of the heavenly bodies, what sentiments should our minds be filled with concerning Him who appointed to each its place and measure and sphere of motion, all which are kept with the most uniform constancy? "Who stretched out the heavens, and telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names. Who laid the foundations of the earth, who comprehendeth the dust of it in a measure, and weigheth the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance." And when we have recounted all the appearances which come within our view, we must add, "Lo, these are part of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?"

The conclusion is, that in all lowliness of mind we set lightly by ourselves; that we form our temper to an implicit submission to the Divine Majesty; beget within ourselves an absolute resignation to all the methods of his providence, in his dealings with the children of men; that in the deepest

humility of our souls we prostrate ourselves before him, and join in that celestial song, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?"

INDEX (1).

TO THE ANALOGY AND DISSERTATIONS, AND TO THE NOTES OF THE VOLUME.

When the chapter is not repeated, the reference belongs to the chapter previously named. *See* Pref. vi.

INDEX (2).

In framing questions on the several Chapters of the Analogy, the following Index, in addition to the Analysis, will be found of service.

"Ejus (Analogiæ) hæc vis est, ut id quod dubium est ad aliquid simile, de quo non quæritur, referat, ut incerta certis probet."—Quint. Inst. Orat., l. i. c. vi.

PRINTED BY W. CLOWES AND SONS, STAMFORD STREET AND CHARING CROSS.

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"I know no author who has made a more just and happy use of analogical reasoning than Bishop Butler in his 'Analogy of Religion.'"—*Dr. Thomas Reid.*

"The most original and profound work extant in any language on the philosophy of religion."—*Sir J. Mackintosh,* 'Progress of Eth. Phil.'

"The most argumentative and philosophical defence of Christianity ever submitted to the world."—*Lord Brougham,* 'A Disc. of Nat. Theol. p. 202.

"The author to whom I am under the greatest obligations, is Bishop Butler." "The whole of this admirable treatise, one of the most remarkable that any language can produce, is intended to show that the principles of moral government taught in the Scriptures, are strictly analogous to those everywhere exhibited in the government of the world, as seen in natural religion."—*Dr. Wayland,* 'Moral Phil.' p. 5; 'Intell. Phil.' p. 338.

"I am ready to acknowledge, that I trace so distinctly to his writings the origin of the soundest and clearest views that I possess upon the nature of the human mind, that I could not write upon this or any kindred subject, without a consciousness that I was directly or indirectly borrowing largely from him."—*Dr. O'Brien,* 'Sermons on the Human Nature of our Lord.'

"It is from this book that I have been confirmed in many truths, of which it does not speak a word, and which probably never entered the mind of the author."—*Dr. M'Crie,* 'Life,' p. 84.

"I have derived greater aid from the views and reasonings of Bishop Butler, than I have been able to find besides in the whole range of our extant authorship."—*Dr. Chalmers,* 'Bridgew. Tr.' Prof.

"I am more indebted to his writings than to those of any other uninspired writer, for the insight which I have been enabled to attain into the motives of the Divine economy, and the foundations of moral obligation."—*Dr. Kaye,* Bishop of Lincoln, 'Some Remains of,' by J. B., 1853.

"I am an entire disciple of Butler."—*Cecil,* 'Remains,' p. 195.

EDITOR'S PREFACE.

THE volume which is now introduced into the Educational Series of the Religious Tract Society, contains one of the most remarkable productions of modern times. It is one of the best works on Christian evidences in any language: it forms an admirable mental discipline; while the spirit in which it is written, and the profound suggestive truths it contains, make it one of the most instructive books (quite apart from its main purpose), that can be put into the hands of a thoughtful student.

Appended to the Analogy, will be found the Fifteen Sermons of Butler, on subjects chiefly Ethical. Besides their intrinsic value, they are remarkable for the influence they have exerted on modern Ethical science. It is, in their connexion with that science, that they deserve special attention; and it is gratifying to find that they form one of the text-books on Ethics in several schools and colleges.

In this edition, pains have been taken to secure an accurate text. In the Analogy, the beautiful edition of Professor Fitzgerald has been followed throughout; the text of the Sermons is taken from the fourth edition, published under Butler's own eye. The example of Dr. Whewell, might have induced the Editor to break up Butler's text into paragraphs, so as to indicate more distinctly the course of thought. On mature deliberation, however, this plan seemed a liberty which he was not justified in taking. He has therefore given the text as Butler published it, indicating, by marginal letters and figures, what he deems to be the train of argument. These letters and figures are explained in the analysis prefixed to each chapter.

The analysis is not intended to supersede the text, but simply to help in studying it. It is therefore as brief as possible, and so framed as to require continual reference to

Butler himself. . . . From experience, the Editor can affirm, that, with most young students, some such aid is essential to the mastering of the arguments of the volume. In preparing the analysis, he has freely consulted the outlines given by Bishop Halifax and Bishop Wilson, by Hobart, Barnes, and Dr. Emory (Ed. New York, 1852), and especially the analyses published by Duke and Wilkinson. The last two are peculiarly happy, though too long and cumbrous for easy use. Of the Dissertations and Sermons, no analysis seems to have been published, though they are both important and difficult enough to make one acceptable.

The Notes appended to this Edition have a threefold aim. Sometimes they give the history of the opinions Butler is refuting, or trace the influence of Butler's own views upon later writers. Sometimes they correct or modify arguments, which more modern inquiry has shown to be of questionable force; and sometimes they point out what most Christian men will admit to be deficiencies in the evangelical tone or sentiments of the Author. Notes of the second and third kind have been added with some diffidence. The Editor yields to none in reverence for Butler's spirit, or in general admiration of the soundness of his reasoning. But the claims of truth are paramount; and after all that has been written on the subject of which Butler treats, there is really no great presumption in suggesting the corrections which this volume will be found to contain.

The Index to the volume has been prepared with considerable care. It is based on one which was made by Dr. Bentham, Prof. of Divinity at Oxford (1763-76), and revised by Bp. Butler himself. The manuscript of this Index remained for many years unknown; till in 1842, it was published by Mr. Bartlett. The Editor has also used the Indexes prepared for the Editions of Professor Fitzgerald and of Dr. Emory, and has inserted many additional topics By giving the chapter, as well as the page of each reference, it is hoped that the Index may be easily available for framing questions on the entire book.

LIFE OF BUTLER.

JOSEPH BUTLER, the author of 'The Analogy,' was born at Wantage, in Berkshire (the birth-place of king Alfred), on the 18th of May, 1692, and was the youngest of eight children. His father, Thomas Butler, was a respectable linen-draper in the place, but before Joseph's birth had retired from business, and was at the time residing at the extremity of the town, in a house called 'The Priory.' The house is still standing, and the room is shown in which Butler is said to have been born. His education was begun in the grammar-school of his native place, under the direction of the Rev. Philip Barton; but his father, perceiving his talent and taste for learning, resolved upon training him for the ministry among the Presbyterians, to which body he himself belonged; with this view, he sent him to an academy at Gloucester (afterwards removed to Tewkesbury), then kept by Mr. Samuel Jones. Mr. Jones was a man of no common ability, and had among his pupils, several distinguished men. Among these may be mentioned, his relative Jeremiah Jones, author of an excellent 'Treatise on the Canon;' Dr. Nath. Lardner, author of the 'Credibility of the Gospels;' Dr. Maddox, Bishop of Worcester; Samuel Chandler, author of the 'Critical Life of David;' and Secker, Butler's intimate friend, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury.

From an early period, the thoughts of Butler were turned to Theology and Metaphysics. While a pupil of Mr. Jones', and at the age of twenty-one, he gave a remarkable proof of his vigour and acuteness, by his anonymous correspondence with Dr. Samuel Clarke. The 'Demonstration of the Being and Attributes of God,' had just been published, and was attracting much attention. Butler questioned the reasoning of the sixth and seventh propositions of Clarke (' on the omnipresence' and ' unity of God'), and displayed such

sagacity, as immediately excited Dr. Clarke's notice. His letters suggested objections, which, in Sir J. Mackintosh's opinion, are really insuperable, 'and are marked by an acuteness, which neither he nor any other ever surpassed.' They are appended to the later editions of Clarke's work. On both the questions which Butler raised, however, he seems eventually to have agreed with his opponent. In the letters, he acknowledges that Clarke had satisfied him upon the first point; and in the Analogy (Part i. chap. vi.), he professes himself an adherent to Clarke's views on the second.

Soon after this correspondence, Butler became dissatisfied with the grounds of his nonconformity, and resolved to unite himself with the Established Church. This step was not agreeable to the wishes of his father, who endeavoured to divert him from his purpose. At length, finding his son's resolution was not to be shaken, he yielded, and Joseph was entered as a Commoner at Oriel College, Oxford, on the 17th March, 1714. Here he formed a friendship with Mr. Edward Talbot, son of Dr. Talbot, afterwards Bishop of Durham. Through the influence of Dr. Talbot, and that of Butler's former correspondent, Dr. Clarke (then Rector of St. James's), he was appointed, in 1718, Preacher at the Rolls Court, London. He was then in his 26th year, and could not have been long ordained. In the meantime, the mind of Secker had undergone a similar change on the subject of nonconformity, and young Talbot, dying, had so earnestly recommended both to the favour of his father, that Dr. Talbot presented Butler, in 1721, to the living of Houghton, and Secker, soon after, to that of Houghton-le-Spring. In 1725, Butler was presented, by the same friend, to the living of Stanhope, where for seven years he devoted himself to the discharge of his pastoral duties, and laboured at his 'Analogy.' Soon after receiving this presentation, he resigned his place as preacher at the Rolls. On resigning, he published his 'Fifteen Sermons,' preached in the chapel of that Court, and dedicated the volume to Sir Joseph Jekyl, 'as a public mark of gratitude for the favours received during his connexion with that Society.' The sermons thus published, were selected from a number of others, some of the rest being probably worked up into the 'Analogy.'

The 'Analogy' was first published in 1736, and is one of the masterpieces of British theology. The author's own mind had been long directed to the theme it discusses, but his determination to prosecute his studies in relation to it, was strengthened by the circumstances of the times. In the established church, there was then little evangelical life. Doddridge had just published his "Free Thoughts on the most probable means of reviving the Dissenting interest, occasioned by the late inquiry into the causes of its decay," and had recently established his Academy at Northampton. John Wesley had recently taught Greek at Oxford, and was now gone to Georgia, little dreaming of the work which God had for him at home. Amid the lifelessness which thus prevailed among all sections of Christians, it had come "to be taken for granted," says Butler, "by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry; but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly, they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment; and nothing remained, but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were, by way of reprisals for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world." "I have lived to see," said Warburton, speaking of the same period, "that fatal crisis, when religion hath lost its hold on the minds of the people."

This state of feeling is illustrated, and was aggravated, by the publications of Woolston, Tindal, and Collins, who attacked Christianity on different sides. Woolston directed his force against the *miracles* of Scripture; Tindal, against the *necessity* of a revelation; and Collins, against its *prophetic evidence*. A host of defenders immediately appeared, including some of the ablest men of the age—Chandler, Sherlock, Lardner, and Bentley. Scores of volumes were written and published, but among the most important is the 'Analogy.' Butler has constantly in view the arguments of these infidel writers, though his work is distinguished by a freedom from controversy, and a moral majesty, as welcome to the student as it is conducive to the interests of truth Next in power to the practical rebuke which was given by the revival of religion to the unhallowed spirit of these

times, was the volume which is here presented to the reader. Four editions were published in the author's life: The main argument has remained without a reply, though in particular parts have been subjected to adverse, and, in some cases, successful criticism.

To the science of ethics, Butler has rendered a service second in importance only to the service which his Analogy has conferred on the evidences of Christianity. His merit consists in the completeness of his development of the supremacy of conscience; in the distinction he has drawn between particular affections and self-love; and, above all, in the Baconian spirit in which he prosecutes his inquiries. He does for ethics what Locke did for mental science, recalling attention to observation and facts. The excellencies of his system, as compared with the systems of his predecessors and contemporaries, are briefly indicated in the Notes to the second of the Dissertations, and the Three Sermons on Human Nature.

The subsequent events of Butler's life are soon told. In 1733, Secker, his firm friend, induced Lord Chancellor Talbot to nominate him his chaplain, and in 1736, to make him a prebendary of Rochester. Through the exertions of the same friend, Butler's name was brought under the notice of queen Caroline, and he was made clerk of the closet. The queen was very fond of philosophy, and her chaplain's attendance was commanded every evening, from seven till nine. On her death, a year after the Analogy was published, she earnestly recommended Butler to her husband, George II., and in 1738, he was appointed bishop of Bristol, and afterwards (as the see was very poor), dean of St. Paul's, London. In 1746, he was made clerk of the closet to George II., and in 1747, was offered the primacy. Taking a dark view of the state of the established church, and deeming himself unfit to remedy the evils he deplored, he declined the office. In 1750, however, the see of Durham becoming vacant by the death of Dr. Edward Chandler, Butler was presented to it, and held it till the 16th June, 1752, when he died at Bath, in the 60th year of his age. ...s buried in the cathedral church of Bristol, where a stone was placed over his remains, with an inscrip-

tion by Dr. W. Forster, his chaplain. In 1834, an elegant monument was erected in the same church, with a very appropriate inscription, furnished by Southey.

The *man* himself it is not difficult to picture. Three portraits of him were taken while he lived; the first, while he resided at Stanhope, in his 40th year; the second, shortly after he became bishop of Bristol; and the last, not long before his death. In all, may be seen a calm and benignant countenance, regular and delicate features, with a sweetness of expression that must have won attachment and love. Traditions gathered up at Stanhope, eighty years after his death, speak of him as "riding a black pony, and always riding fast." He is said also to have lived very retired, to have been very kind to the poor, and so pestered with beggars, that to get rid of them, he often returned to the rectory without completing his ride.

Of his appearance and behaviour as bishop of Durham, we have three distinct accounts. "From the first of my remembrance," says Miss Talbot, "I have ever known in him the kind affectionate friend, the faithful adviser, which he would condescend to when I was quite a child; and the most delightful companion, from a delicacy of thinking, an extreme politeness, a vast knowledge of the world, and a something peculiar to be met with in nobody else. And all this in a man whose sanctity of manners and sublimity of genius, gave him one of the first ranks among men." "During the short time," says Surtees, "that Butler held the see of Durham, he conciliated all hearts. In advanced years, he retained the same genuine modesty and native sweetness of disposition, which had distinguished him in youth, and in retirement." "He was," says Hutchinson, "of a most reverend aspect; his face thin and pale; but there was a divine placidness in his countenance, which inspired veneration, and expressed the most benevolent mind. His white hair hung gracefully on his shoulders, and his whole figure was patriarchal."[1]

He was naturally somewhat melancholy, very fond of music, and, as may be gathered from the preceding sketches, modest and retiring. In parliament, which he attended regularly, he never spoke, nor took any active part in

[1] Quoted in 'Fitzgerald's Life.'

politics. Hence, Horace Walpole said of him, "that he was wafted to the see of Durham in a cloud of metaphysics, and remained absorbed in it." By natural temperament, as well as by religious conviction, he was very conscientious, and sometimes even scrupulous; most generous in his liberality, simple in all his habits, discountenancing extravagance, and spending most of his income in repairing churches, building parsonage-houses, and in aiding local charities. Though he was never married, and had few dependents, he died worth less than a half-year's income of the see he held.

A story is told (on the authority of Mr. Venn), of his last moments, quite in harmony with his general character, and beautifully illustrative of the grace of Christ. When Butler lay on his death-bed, he called for his chaplain, and said, "Though I have endeavoured to avoid sin, and to please God to the utmost of my power, yet, from the consciousness of perpetual infirmities, I am still afraid to die." "My lord," said the chaplain, "you have forgotten that Jesus Christ is a Saviour." "True," was the answer, "but how shall I know that he is a Saviour for me?" "My lord, it is written, 'Him that cometh to me I will in no wise cast out.'" "True," said the Bishop, "and I am surprised, that though I have read that Scripture a thousand times over I never felt its virtue till this moment; and now I die happy."

SACRED
TO THE MEMORY
OF
JOSEPH BUTLER, D.C.L.
TWELVE YEARS BISHOP OF THIS DIOCESE,
AND
AFTERWARDS BISHOP OF DURHAM,
WHOSE MORTAL PART IS DEPOSITED
IN THE CHOIR OF THIS CATHEDRAL.

OTHERS HAD ESTABLISHED
THE HISTORICAL AND PROPHETICAL GROUNDS
OF THE CHRISTIAN RELIGION,
AND
THAT SURE TESTIMONY OF ITS TRUTH
WHICH IS FOUND IN ITS PERFECT ADAPTATION
TO THE HEART OF MAN.

IT WAS RESERVED FOR HIM TO DEVELOP
ITS ANALOGY TO THE CONSTITUTION
AND COURSE OF NATURE.

AND LAYING HIS STRONG FOUNDATIONS
IN THE DEPTH OF THAT GREAT ARGUMENT,
THERE TO CONSTRUCT
ANOTHER AND IRREFRAGABLE PROOF;
THUS RENDERING PHILOSOPHY
SUBSERVIENT TO FAITH;
AND FINDING IN OUTWARD AND VISIBLE THINGS
THE TYPE AND EVIDENCE*
OF THOSE WITHIN THE VEIL.

BORN A.D. 1692. DIED 1752.

* "HE WHO BELIEVES THE SCRIPTURE
TO HAVE PROCEEDED FROM HIM WHO IS THE
AUTHOR OF NATURE, MAY WELL EXPECT
TO FIND THE SAME SORT OF DIFFICULTIES
IN IT AS ARE FOUND IN THE CONSTITUTION
OF NATURE."—'Origen, Philocal.' p. 23.]

Monument erected in the Cathedral of Bristol, in 1834. The inscription is by Dr. Southey.

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PREFIXED TO THE FIRST EDITION.

If the reader should meet here with anything which he had not before attended to, it will not be in the observations upon the constitution and course of Nature, these being all obvious, but in the application of them: in which, though there is nothing but what appears to me of some real weight, and therefore of great importance, yet he will observe several things which will appear to him of very little, if he can think things to be of little importance which are of any real weight at all, upon such a subject as religion. However, the proper force of the following treatise lies in the whole general analogy considered together.

It is come, I know not how, to be taken for granted, by many persons, that Christianity is not so much as a subject of inquiry, but that it is now at length discovered to be fictitious. And accordingly they treat it as if, in the present age, this were an agreed point among all people of discernment, and nothing remained but to set it up as a principal subject of mirth and ridicule, as it were by way of reprisals, for its having so long interrupted the pleasures of the world. On the contrary, thus much, at least, will be here found, not taken for granted, but proved, that any reasonable man, who will thoroughly consider the matter, may be as much assured as he is of his own being, that it is not, however, so clear a case, that there is nothing in it. There is, I think, strong evidence of its truth; but it is certain no one can, upon principles of reason, be satisfied of the contrary. And the practical consequence to be drawn from this is not attended to by every one who is concerned in it.

May, 1736.

THE ANALOGY.

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DISSERTATION II.

ANALOGY; ITS NATURE AND USE.

[ANALOGY, the principle of reasoning adopted in this volume, needs to be carefully defined, 'no word in our tongue being more loosely used' (Mill.) Quintilian, whose language Butler has placed on the title of his book, indicates by the term a part of grammar. So regarded, its business is to fix the declension or gender or conjugation of unknown words, by comparing their forms with those of other words already familiar. The Schoolmen, on the other hand, used it to describe terms in connexion with Rhetoric. With them, analogous words were words founded on resemblance; properly applicable to one object, and less properly to another. 'Greek nouns in ιδης are generally patronymics, as are Scotch names with Mc, so therefore are these'—is an example of the first; 'A smiling landscape' is an example of the second. In both these senses the word analogy is still used in common life; and on analogy in the second sense, nearly all the technical language of moral and mental science is framed. A very little examination will show that these senses of the word are closely connected with the sense in which Archbishop Whately uses it.[1] Similarity of relation is implied in each case.

Properly speaking, analogy is a kind of resemblance; and an argument from analogy is founded upon such resemblance. Not *any* kind of resemblance, but a particular kind. Resemblances in appearance, in incidental circumstances, or even in properties, considered by themselves, form no sufficient basis for analogy. They often form the basis of figures of speech, or allegories, but they prove nothing. They do not even appeal to the reason, only to the fancy; and their use is—illustration or embellishment. If, however, the resemblance involves, or is supposed to involve, a similarity or identity of relation, there is analogy. It appeals, more or less, to the reasoning faculty, and may form a solid argument. Hence it is defined by Aristotle as a 'likeness' or 'parity of reason,'[2] and by Dr. Copleston, as a similarity, not 'of two things,' but 'of two relations.'[3] 'As two is to four, so is four to eight, or three to six;'

[1] 'Rhetoric,' Part I. chap. II. § 7.

[2] λόγων ὁμοιότης: ἰσότης λόγου, Ethic. Nic. v. 3.

[3] 'Enquiry into the Doctrines of Necessity and Predestination.' Notes to Disc. III.

'As the law of projectile forces is to the motion of a stone thrown from the hand, so is the law of central and centrifugal forces to the motion of the heavenly bodies through space:' 'In nature, means apparently undesirable are used by God (the deist admits) to produce desirable ends, the use of similar means for similar ends in a revelation, is therefore consistent with the supposition that the revelation is from God: He does sometimes use them in the one, He *may* use them in the other: Some means he *nearly always* uses in the one; some means, therefore, he will *most probably* use in the other:' All these are examples of analogy, and in each case, it is not the things which are alike—2, 4, 3, 6, but their relations to each other, or to other things. It will be observed, that the two sets of relations compared may consist of three distinct terms, one reappearing in each set, or of four; and that the reasoning is unaffected by this circumstance.

In studying 'The Analogy,' it is of the utmost importance to keep in mind the chief uses of this kind of reasoning.

1. As an argument, it is *demonstrative* only in proving results or causes to be not improbable. It meets objections by a direct negative. It *defends* Christianity, without in the first instance contributing materially to the positive evidence on its side. Origen, for example, affirms 'that he who believes the Scripture to have proceeded from Him who is the Author of Nature, may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are found in Nature.' This is an analogical statement. None, however, can say that the difficulties of Scripture prove it to be Divine; though it is conclusive to say, 'The difficulties of Scripture do not justify us in denying its Divine origin, for in Nature there are similar difficulties, and Nature is admitted to have sprung from Him.' So, should the atheist affirm that there is no God, and thence infer that there can be no future state of reward and punishment, Analogy replies— 'In this life, though, as is said, there be no God, men are rewarded and punished; that is, they are under government. If so, that there is no God is no reason why they may not be under like government in the life to come.' 'No-God' is consistent with government now; nor will it be inconsistent with government hereafter. To repel objections, therefore, is the first business of analogy; and in that department its argument amounts to demonstration, and its conclusions, expressed in negative forms ('not inconsistent with,' 'not incredible that,') or their affirmative equivalents ('it *may* notwithstanding'), are irrefragable. The whole of the reasonings of Bishop Butler may be put in this form; and it will be observed that the second part of his work uses analogy for these defensive purposes exclusively.

2. There is, however, a wider application of analogical reasoning, and indeed it may be said, that there is a wider meaning of the term itself. Whately, Copleston, and others, use the word 'Analogy' in the strict sense, as meaning resemblance of *relations*. But by many metaphysical writers, including Locke, Hartley, Mill, and Butler himself, it is used to express an argument founded on resemblance of any kind, though generally falling short of full proof. Sir Humphrey Davy, for example, discovered that potash has a metallic base. But other alkalies have sensible properties like potash. He therefore concluded, that it was probable they had also metallic bases; a conclusion verified by subsequent discovery.

Evidence resting upon analogy in this sense admits, of course, of different degrees. It may amount to the highest moral certainty, it may give no more than the lowest presumption. The *positive* evidence, for example, in favour of a future life, founded on the single analogy of the changes of the chrysalis is small;[3] while the evidence founded on the uniform fact, that in Nature nothing is ever *wasted* or *annihilated*—therefore, not the soul[4]—is strong: the force depending in each case, on the frequency of the supposed analogous facts, and the real resemblance between the things compared. Examples of this use of analogy abound in the first part of this treatise.

It is important to remark, that in the affairs of life, all evidence is of the *kind* described in the last paragraph. Mathematical reasoning is *demonstrative*, and its conclusions certain, because they are virtually included in the premises; so are the conclusions of logic. But in matters of fact, and in maxims of prudence, we are guided simply by what is probable. What is often called even *positive* proof belongs to the same class. Testimony, written records, the very evidence of our senses, to take the strongest case, are none of them certain; they are probable, and probable only.[5] The remark of Butler, therefore, is just, that analogy differs from other evidence only in *degree*, not in *kind*; and that its force depends on the completeness of the resemblance (in what is material), of the things we compare.

3. By some writers, as Dr. Hampden, forms of induction itself are included under this term; and Butler seems to concur in this view (p. 4.) When once an inquirer understands what a cause is, and why or how it acts, so as to be able to point out the connexion between it and the result, and then applies this knowledge to con-

[3] Butler, Part i. chap. i.

[4] 'Is it possible to make the Best of both Worlds,' p. 220.

[5] See Gambier on 'Moral Evidence,' p. 67

nect other and similar results with the same or similar causes, testing the accuracy of the process by experiment, the analogy becomes induction in the strictest sense. The existence of a present moral government is *proved* in this way, by Butler; and the fact of a future government is (admitting a future life), all but proved: for the evidence is traced up to qualities in man, and to attributes in God, which we can hardly conceive to be capable of change.

Still, as human nature is fallen, the doctrine of causation abstruse, especially when applied to God and his perfections, and reasoning from the known to the unknown, from what is to what will be, extremely uncertain; *positive* arguments from analogy in relation to religion, must be received with great caution. Arguments *against* objections to revelation, and involving *negative* conclusions, rest on different premises, and may be admitted without distrust. To show from Nature what God will do or reveal in Scripture, is one thing: To show from Nature that parts of Scripture which speak of his doings, form no valid objection to its Divine authority, is another.[6]

The reader may find these questions more or less fully discussed in Locke, Book v. chap. 16, sec. 12; Reid's Enquiries, chap. 4; Stewart's Elements, ii. chap. 4, sec. 2, § 3; Mill's Logic, ii. 426; and in Hampden's Essay on the Philos. Evidence of Christianity, p. 60, etc. All these writers concur in giving the wider meaning of analogy. Tappan's Logic, Book iv. sec. 10; Dr. Tatham's Chart and Scale of Truth, vol. i. p. 50–62; Wayland's Intellectual Philosophy, chap. vi. sec. 4; and Chalmers' Lectures on Butler's Analogy, favour the narrower view. See also the works of Whately, Coplestone, and Gambier, already quoted.

[6] The language of Dugald Stewart seems on the whole just. After referring to the opinions of Dr. Reid and Dr. Campbell, and expressing his doubts "whether both of these ingenious writers have not somewhat underrated the importance of analogy as a medium of proof," he adds, "I acknowledge, at the same time, that between the positive and the negative application of this species of evidence, there is an essential difference. When employed to refute an objection, it may often furnish an argument irresistibly and unanswerably convincing. When employed as a medium of proof, it can never authorize more than a probable conjecture. . . . In some instances, however, the probability resulting from a concurrence of different analogies, may rise as high, as to produce an effect on the belief scarcely distinguishable from moral certainty".—'Elements,' ii., 423, note

The precise place of analogy in the Christian Evidences is easily assigned to it. It is part of the *Internal* Evidence, resting on the message itself, not on the credentials of the messengers. It appeals, not to a priori reasoning, but to facts and principles already learned by experience in Nature; not to minute coincidences between the sacred history and other records, or to the feelings and spiritual insight of renewed men, but to the consciences and judgments of all. It requires less learning than External Evidence, involves no assumptions, and is appreciable by the whole race. In Scripture, it is of constant occurrence: Every parable and miracle, every comparison and figure, being intended to explain and in some degree to enforce Divine truth by things and facts already familiar. See Matt. v.-vii.; 1 Cor. xv. 36.]

INTRODUCTION.

[ANALYSIS.]

A[1] Of the nature of analogical evidence in general.

1 Such evidence is various in degrees, from low presumptions to moral certainty: *one* slight presumption cannot make anything probable; but many can. Ebb and flow of tide.

2 Its foundation is verisimilitude, or likeness to some truth, or fact; likeness either in the thing itself, or in its evidence or circumstances.

Here the degree of probability is as the frequency with which we have observed the same or like things. It becomes presumption, opinion, conviction, and forms a rule of hope and judgments.

3 Its measure imperfect, but obligatory:

a *Imperfect*, and fit for limited capacities, for to God nothing is probable;

b Yet *obligatory*, however low the presumption in favour of any opinion, or practice. Indeed, where men must act, prudence will select the course which seems right, even though the chances of success are even or adverse.

B Of the utility of such evidence, and its application to religion. Its measure not discussed, but yet its utility obvious

1 In determining our judgments and practice in common life:

2 In relation to religion and God's present government. From it one may reason with Origen.

[1] In these outlines the connexion and subordination of thoughts are indicated thus:—

A	1	a	1	(a)	(1)
B	2	b	2	(b)	(2)
C	3	c	3	(c)	(3)

and very occasionally (a) (1)

where, for example, (1) is a subdivision under (a), as (a) is under 1, and 1 under a, and a under 1, and 1 under A. Ordinarily A, B, etc., represent distinct subjects. Corresponding letters and figures will be found in the margin of the text.

a That difficulties must be expected in Scripture as in Nature,
b That a denial of the Divine origin of Scripture on this ground will end in a denial of the Divine origin of the world, and,
c That both systems have the same Author; or, at least, that objections against the one are answered by the other.

2 In forming our notions of religion, it is superior,
a To reasoning on assumed principles:
b To reasoning on true principles, the applicability of which is assumed; and hence,
c Butler intends to apply it to religion, natural and revealed, assuming an Author and Governor of Nature; which assumption has no prior improbability, and has often been proved by accumulated evidence:
d To vain speculations how the world might have been better; which speculations may be shown to be vain, thus —
1 Probably the speculator himself would admit his plan to be not the very best, whether he contemplated the greatest amount of virtue or of happiness, or of both,
2 And certainly foolish and extravagant plans would be formed, involving conclusions like these, — all creatures must be made at once perfect, free from all hazard and toil, and without dread or risk of punishment,
3 For such speculations men have not faculties.
(a) Of *ends* we may judge; hence we believe that the greatest amount of virtue and happiness is God's end in providence, a belief to which our whole nature impels us, and *of* which that nature is an evidence (see 4.);
(b) But of means we cannot — no,
(c) Not even of the best means of training a *single* person, much less a system; and,
(d) Hence men cannot judge each other; how then can they judge God?

C Practical conclusion: Leave speculation, and mark,
1 The conduct of Nature with respect to intelligent creatures,
2 The laws to be gathered from it; and,
3 The analogy between what we *find* in Nature, and what we believe or expect in religion: whence it will appear that they are both of a piece.

D The force of *this* analogy,
1 Varied, being sometimes a practical proof, sometimes a confirmation, of what is otherwise proved,
2 Shows that religion is not ridiculous, unless Nature be a ; as

3 Answers objections against the system of religion, and to a large extent objections against its evidence.

E The treatise is divided into two parts, and is thus analysed:

The first, On religion in general, *i.e.*, on natural religion: wherein it is shown that there is a *future* life, Chap. I.; a *natural* government, present and future, Chap. II.; a *moral* government, Chap. III.; that life is a probation state, involving *risk*, Chap. IV., promoting *improvement* and testing character, Chap. V.; that the *facts* of moral government are not affected by any opinions on necessity, Chap. VI.; and that the *perfection* of God's government cannot be objected to, for it is, as a scheme, incomprehensible, Chap. VII.

The second, On Christianity in particular, *i.e.*, on revealed religion: where it is shown that Christianity is *important*, Chap. I.; that as *miraculous*, no objection can be urged against it, Chap. II.; that as a *scheme*, no valid *objection* can be urged against it, either against it as a *fact*, though differing from our expectations, Chap. III.; or against the *moral perfections* displayed in it, Chap. IV., § 1; or against the system of *means* and *general laws* whereby it is carried on, Chap. IV., § 2; or against *mediation*, Chap. V.; or against its want of universality and supposed deficient proof, Chap. VI.; or against its evidence, prophetic, miraculous, or general, Chap. VII.; and, lastly, that analogy is strongly and in various ways on the side of religion, general and revealed (a, b, c), Chap. VIII.]

PROBABLE evidence is essentially distinguished from demonstrative by this, that it admits of degrees;[1] and of all variety of them, from the highest moral certainty to the very lowest presumption. We cannot indeed say a thing is probably true upon one very slight presumption for it; because, as there may be probabilities on both sides of a question, there may be some against it: and though there be not, yet a slight presumption does not beget that degree of conviction, which is implied in saying a thing is probably true. But that the slightest possible presumption is of the nature of a probability appears from hence, that such low presumption, often repeated, will amount even to moral certainty. Thus a man's having observed the ebb and flow of the tide to-day, affords A 1

[1] [See Introductory Statements on Analogy.]

some sort of presumption, though the lowest imaginable, that it may happen again to-morrow: but the observation of this event for so many days, and months, and ages together, as it has been observed by mankind, gives us a full assurance that it will.

2 That which chiefly constitutes Probability is expressed in the word Likely, *i. e.*, like some truth,[2] or true event; like it, in itself, in its evidence, in some more or fewer of its circumstances. For when we determine a thing to be probably true, suppose that an event has or will come to pass, it is from the mind's remarking in it a likeness to some other event, which we have observed has come to pass. And this observation forms, in numberless daily instances, a presumption, opinion, or full conviction that such event has or will come to pass; according as the observation is, that the like event has sometimes, most commonly, or always, so far as our observation reaches, come to pass at like distances of time, or place, or upon like occasions. Hence arises the belief that a child, if it lives twenty years, will grow up to the stature and strength of a man; that food will contribute to the preservation of its life, and the want of it for such a number of days be its certain destruction. So likewise the rule and measure of our hopes and fears concerning the success of our pursuits; our expectations that others will act so and so in such circumstances; and our judgment that such actions proceed from such principles; all these rely upon our having observed the like to what we hope, fear, expect, judge; I say upon our having observed the like, either with respect to others or

[2] Verisimile. [Though Butler seems to use the words probable and likely in the same sense, there is a difference between them, which he seems elsewhere to admit. A thing is "probable" when we can allege some reason for it; "likely" when it bears a resemblance to an actual or supposed fact. It is the old distinction between εἰκὸς and σημεῖον, the ground of opinion why a charge may be true and the proof of the charge itself. In common usage, however, "likely" and "probable" (as εἰκὸς and σημεῖον) are not distinguished, from the fact that the likelihood of things is often placed among the proofs that they have occurred; as when, from avowed ill-will to a murdered man, it is attempted to prove that a prisoner has murdered him. See Hampden's Philos. Evid., p. 268, and Intro. Note on Analogy.]

ourselves. And thus, whereas the prince[a] who had always lived in a warm climate, naturally concluded, in the way of analogy, that there was no such thing as water's becoming hard, because he had always observed it to be fluid and yielding; we, on the contrary, from analogy conclude that there is no presumption at all against this; that it is supposable there may be frost in England any given day in January next; probable that there will on some day of the month; and that there is a moral certainty, *i.e.*, ground for an expectation, without any doubt of it, in some part or other of the winter.

Probable evidence, in its very nature, affords but an imperfect kind of information; and is to be considered as relative only to beings of limited capacities. For nothing which is the possible object of knowledge, whether past, present, or future, can be probable to an infinite Intelligence; since it cannot but be discerned absolutely as it is in itself, certainly true, or certainly false. But to *us*, probability is the very guide of life.

From these things it follows, that in questions of difficulty, or such as are thought so, where more satisfactory evidence cannot be had, or is not seen; if the result of examination be, that there appears upon the whole any the lowest presumption on one side, and none on the other, or a greater presumption on one side, though in the lowest degree greater, this determines the question, even in matters of speculation; and in matters of practice, will lay us under an absolute and formal obligation, in point of prudence and of interest, to act upon that presumption or low probability, though it be so low as to leave the mind in very great doubt which is the truth. For surely a man is as really bound in prudence to do what upon the whole appears, according to the best of his judgment, to be for his happiness, as what he certainly knows to be so. Nay further, in questions of great consequence, a reasonable man will think it concerns him to remark lower probabilities and presumptions than these; such as amount to no more than showing one side of a question to be as supposable and credible as the other; nay, such as but amount to much less even than this. For numberless

[a] The story is told by Mr. Locke in the chapter of Probability.—[Essay on the Human Understanding, book iv., c. 15, s. 5.]

instances might be mentioned respecting the common pursuits of life, where a man would be thought, in a literal sense, distracted who would not act, and with great application too, not only upon an even chance, but upon much less, and where the probability or chance was greatly against his succeeding.[4]

It is not my design to inquire further into the nature, the foundation, and measure of probability; or whence it proceeds that *likeness* should beget that presumption, opinion, and full conviction, which the human mind is formed to receive from it, and which it does necessarily produce in every one; or to guard against the errors, to which reasoning from analogy is liable. This belongs to the subject of Logic, and is a part of that subject which has not yet been thoroughly considered. Indeed, I shall not take upon me to say how far the extent, compass, and force of analogical reasoning can be reduced to general heads and rules, and the whole be formed into a system. But though so little in this way has been attempted by those who have treated of our intellectual powers and the exercise of them, this does not hinder but that we may be, as we unquestionably are, assured, that analogy is of weight, in various degrees, towards determining our judgment and our practice. Nor does it in any wise cease to be of weight in those cases, because persons,

[4] See chap. vi., part ii. [These remarks of Butler's on the prudence of (say) a religious course are quite just. Even if the doctrine of another life were improbable, it would be wise to live as if it were true. Men can lose nothing, and may gain much, by acting upon it. Still it must be remembered that, while prudence may guide our conduct, it cannot control our hearts. A religion adhered to from prudence alone is not the religion of Scripture. We need faith, and love, and hope—in one word, an inner life, as the spring of outward holiness; and all these the evidences and truths of Christianity are intended to supply. The remark of Professor Fitzgerald is, however, also true: "It is not inconceivable that the Almighty should require men first to act upon a thing, as true, before they are so fully satisfied of its truth as to leave no doubt remaining." It is also to be noted that Scripture speaks of religion itself as a form of prudence or thoughtfulness, Matt. xxv. 1. See Butler's own remarks on a similar topic in Part II., Chap. VIII. Prudence, according to Butler, implies the preference of interest to passion—itself a commendable decision.]

either given to dispute, or who require things to be stated with greater exactness than our faculties appear to admit of in practical matters, may find other cases in which it is not easy to say whether it be, or be not, of any weight; or instances of seeming analogies, which are really of none. It is enough to the present purpose to observe, that this general way of arguing is evidently natural, just, and conclusive. For there is no man can make a question but that the sun will rise to-morrow; and be seen, where it is seen at all, in the figure of a circle, and not in that of a square.

Hence, namely, from analogical reasoning, Origen[a] has, 2
with singular sagacity, observed, that *he who believes the Scrip-*
ture to have proceeded from him who is the Author of Nature, a
may well expect to find the same sort of difficulties in it as are
found in the constitution of Nature. And in a like way of re-
flection it may be added, that he who denies the Scripture to
have been from God upon account of these difficulties, may, b
for the very same reason, deny the world to have been formed
by him. On the other hand, if there be an analogy or likeness
between that system of things and dispensation of Provi- c
dence, which Revelation informs us of, and that system of
things and dispensation of Providence, which experience together with reason informs us of, *i. e.*, the known course of Nature; this is a presumption, that they have both the same author and cause; at least so far as to answer objections against the former's being from God, drawn from anything

[a] Χρὴ μέν τοι γε τὸν ἅπαξ παραδεξάμενον τοῦ κτίσαντος τὸν κόσμον εἶναι ταύτας τὰς γραφὰς πεπεῖσθαι, ὅτι ὅσα περὶ τῆς κτίσεως ἀπαντᾷ τοῖς ζητοῦσι τὸν περὶ αὐτῆς λόγον, ταῦτα καὶ περὶ τῶν γραφῶν.—Philocal., p. 23, ed. Cant. [translated in the text.]

[This remark Origen applies in support of a questionable system of Biblical interpretation. In several instances, however, he applies analogy as Butler does in defence of the doctrines of the gospel. Christ's death in our stead—the treachery of Judas not inconsistent with our Lord's Divine mission—the heresies of the early church no evidence against the truth of Christianity—he illustrates by analogous facts (Cont. Cels., lib. i., ii., iii.) This kind of reasoning is common in the early apologists (see also especially Tertullian "On the Testimony of the Soul," and Athenagoras "On the Resurrection"), and abounds in the discourses of Plato, and even in the severer treatises of Aristotle.]

which is analogical or similar to what is in the latter, which is acknowledged to be from him: for an Author of Nature is here supposed.

3 Forming our notions of the constitution and government of the world upon reasoning, without foundation for the principles
a ciples which we assume, whether from the attributes of God or anything else; is building a world upon hypothesis, like Des Cartes. Forming our notions upon reasoning from prin-
b ciples which are certain, but applied to cases to which we have no ground to apply them, (like those who explain the structure of the human body, and the nature of diseases and medicines from mere mathematics without sufficient *data*;) is an error much akin to the former: since what is assumed in order to make the reasoning applicable, is hypothesis. But it must be allowed just, to join abstract reasonings with the observation of facts, and argue from such facts as are known, to others that are like them; from that part of the Divine government over intelligent creatures which comes under our view, to that larger and more general government over them which is beyond it; and from what is present, to collect what is likely, credible, or not incredible, will be hereafter.

This method then of concluding and determining being practical, and what, if we will act at all, we cannot but act upon in the common pursuits of life; being evidently conclusive in various degrees, proportionable to the degree and exactness of the whole analogy or likeness; and having so great authority for its introduction into the subject of reli-
c gion, even revealed religion; my design is to apply it to that subject in general, both natural and revealed: taking for proved, that there is an intelligent Author of Nature, and natural Governor of the world. For as there is no presumption against this prior to the proof of it: so it has been often proved with accumulated evidence; from this argument of analogy and final causes; from abstract reasonings; from the most ancient tradition and testimony; and from the general consent of mankind. Nor does it appear, so far as I can find, to be denied by the generality of those who profess themselves dissatisfied with the evidence of religion.

d As there are some, who, instead of thus attending to what is in fact the constitution of Nature, form their notions of

God's government upon hypothesis: so there are others, who indulge themselves in vain and idle speculations,* how the world might possibly have been framed otherwise than it is: and upon supposition that things might, in imagining that they should have been disposed and carried on after a better model, than what appears in the present disposition and conduct of them. Suppose now a person of such a turn of mind, to go on with his reveries, till he had at length fixed upon some particular plan of Nature, as appearing to him the best. One shall scarce be thought guilty of detraction against human understanding, if one should say, even beforehand, that the plan which this speculative person would fix upon, though he were the wisest of the sons of men, probably would not be the very best, even according to his own notions of *best*; whether he thought that to be so, which afforded occasions and motives for the exercise of the greatest virtue, or which was productive of the greatest happiness, or that these two were necessarily connected, and run up into one and the same plan. However, it may not be amiss once for all to see, what would be the amount of these emendations and imaginary improvements upon the system of Nature, or how far they would mislead us. And it seems there could be no stopping till we came to some such conclusions as these: that all creatures should at first be made as perfect and as happy as they were capable of ever being: that nothing, to be sure, of hazard or danger should be put upon them to do; some indolent persons would perhaps think nothing at all: or certainly, that effectual care should be taken, that they should, whether necessarily or not, yet eventually and in fact, always do what was right and most conducive to happiness, which would be thought easy for infinite power to effect; either by not giving them any principles which would endanger their going wrong; or by laying the right motive of action in every instance before their minds continually in so strong a manner, as would never fail of inducing them to act conformably to it: and that the whole method of government by punishments should be re-

* [Professor Fitzgerald supposes that Butler had Bayle's Speculations in view when penning this paragraph. See Bayle's Notes to 'Manichæans,' and 'Origen' in his Critical Dictionary.]

jected as absurd; as an awkward round-about method of carrying things on; nay, as contrary to a principal purpose, for which it would be supposed creatures were made, namely, happiness.

3 Now, without considering what is to be said in particular to the several parts of this train of folly and extravagance; what has been above intimated, is a full direct general answer to it, namely, that we may see beforehand that we have not faculties for this kind of speculation. For though it be admitted, that, from the first principles of our nature, we unavoidably judge or determine some ends to be absolutely in
(a) themselves preferable to others, and that the ends now mentioned, or if they run up into one, that this one is absolutely the best; and consequently that we must conclude the ultimate end designed, in the constitution of Nature and conduct of Providence, is the most virtue and happiness possible: yet we are far from being able to judge what particular disposition of things would be most friendly and assistant to virtue;
(b) or what means might be absolutely necessary to produce the most happiness in a system of such extent as our own world may be, taking in all that is past and to come, though we should suppose it detached from the whole of things. Indeed we are so far from being able to judge of this, that we are not
(c) judges what may be the necessary means of raising and conducting one person to the highest perfection and happiness of his nature. Nay, even in the little affairs of the present
(d) life, we find men of different educations and ranks are not competent judges of the conduct of each other. Our whole nature leads us to ascribe all moral perfection to God, and to deny all imperfection of him. And this will for ever be a practical proof of his moral character, to such as will consider what a practical proof is; because it is the voice of God speaking in us. And from hence we conclude, that virtue must be the happiness, and vice the misery, of every creature; and that regularity and order and right cannot but prevail finally in a universe under his government. But we are in no sort judges, what are the necessary means of accomplishing this end.

4 Let us then, instead of that idle and not very innocent employment of forming imaginary models of a world, and schemes of governing it, turn our thoughts to what we ex-

perience to be the conduct of Nature with respect to intelli- 1
gent creatures; which may be resolved into general laws or
rules of administration, in the same way as many of the laws 2
of Nature respecting inanimate matter may be collected
from experiments. And let us compare the known constitu- 3
tion and course of things with what is said to be the moral system of Nature; the acknowledged dispensations of Providence, or that government which we find ourselves under, with what religion teaches us to believe and expect; and see whether they are not analogous and of a piece. And upon such a comparison it will, I think, be found, that they are very much so: that both may be traced up to the same general laws, and resolved into the same principles of Divine conduct.

The analogy here proposed to be considered is of a pretty 12
large extent, and consists of several parts, in some, more, in others, less, exact. In some few instances perhaps it may amount to a real practical proof; in others not so.[f] Yet in
these it is a confirmation of what is proved other ways. It 1
will undeniably show, what too many want to have shown them, that the system of Religion, both natural and revealed, considered only as a system, and prior to the proof of it, is
not a subject of ridicule, unless that of Nature be so too. 2
And it will afford an answer to almost all objections against the system both of natural and revealed Religion; though
not perhaps an answer in so great a degree, yet in a very 3
considerable degree an answer to the objections against the evidence of it: for objections against a proof, and objections against what is said to be proved, the reader will observe are different things.

Now the Divine government of the world, implied in the 13
notion of religion in general and of Christianity, contains in it; that mankind is appointed to live in a future state;[8] that there every one shall be rewarded or punished;[9] rewarded or punished respectively for all that behaviour here, which we comprehend under the words, virtuous or vicious, morally good or evil:[10] that our present life is a probation, a state of trial,[11] and of discipline,[12] for that future one; notwithstand

[f] [See Introductory Statements on Analogy.]
[8] Part I., chap i. [9] Chap. ii. [10] Chap. iii.
[11] Chap. iv. [12] Chap. v

ing the objections, which men may fancy they have, from notions of necessity, against there being any such moral plan as this at all;[13] and whatever objections may appear to lie against the wisdom and goodness of it, as it stands so imperfectly made known to us at present:[14] that this world being in a state of apostasy and wickedness, and consequently of ruin, and the sense both of their condition and duty being greatly corrupted amongst men, this gave occasion for an additional dispensation of providence; of the utmost importance;[15] proved by miracles;[16] but containing in it many things appearing to us strange, and not to have been expected;[17] a dispensation of providence, which is a scheme or system of things;[18] carried on by mediation of a Divine person, the Messiah, in order to the recovery of the world;[19] yet not revealed to all men, nor proved with the strongest possible evidence of all those to whom it is revealed; but only to such a part of mankind, and with such particular evidence as the wisdom of God thought fit.[20] The design then of the following treatise will be to show, that the several parts principally objected against in this moral and Christian dispensation, including its scheme, its publication, and the proof which God has afforded us of its truth; that the particular parts principally objected against in this whole
a dispensation, are analogous to what is experienced in the constitution and course of Nature, or Providence; that the chief objections themselves which are alleged against the former, are no other than what may be alleged with like
b justness against the latter, where they are found in fact to be inconclusive; and that this argument from analogy is in general unanswerable, and undoubtedly of weight on the side of religion,[21] notwithstanding the objections which may seem
c to lie against it, and the real ground which there may be for difference of opinion, as to the particular degree of weight which is to be laid upon it. This is the general account of what may be looked for in the following Treatise. And I shall begin it with that which is the foundation of all our hopes and of all our fears; all our hopes and fears, which are of any consideration; I mean in a future life.

[13] Chap. vi. [14] Chap. vii. [15] Part ii., chap. i.
[16] Chap. ii. [17] Chap. iii. [18] Chap. iv.
[19] Chap. v. [20] Chap. vi., vii. [21] Chap. viii.

ANALOGY OF RELIGION

TO

THE CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE.

PART I.

OF NATURAL RELIGION.[1]

CHAPTER I.

OF A FUTURE LIFE.[2]

[A A future life is probable:

1 From similar changes already undergone in,

a Ourselves, and in,

b Other creatures—worms, birds, etc.

2 From our present powers, which are likely to *continue*, unless sloth destroy them. We *fear* death may, but there is no proof that it will,

1 [The *first* part of this treatise, it must be carefully noted, discusses natural religion—such truths as *may* be learned from creation and providence; and the language used is generally such as an imperfect revelation of that kind suggests. The *second* part discusses revealed religion—such truths as may be learned from Nature, and are taught in Scripture, together with such as are peculiar to the Christian system.

The distinction between natural and revealed religion is itself very liable to be misapprehended. Some hold that there are not even the elementary truths of such a science as the religion of Nature. Others, overlooking the fact that "natural religion has had the opportunity of rekindling her faded taper by gospel light"

a Either from the nature of death. We know not what *it* is, nor do we know on what the *existence* of our powers (not their exercise) depends.

b Or from the analogy of Nature, which shows only that the *sensible proof* of our powers (not the powers themselves) may be destroyed; and gives presumptions on the other side, as above.

B Still men *imagine* death will *destroy* them. This imagination unfounded. Take the question in *three* forms:

1 Is death the *destruction* of *living beings?* No reason to think it is, for this supposes we are compounded, and so discerptible; but the contrary is probable, having metaphysical and experimental proofs.

a Metaphysical: consciousness is indivisible; so must the subject in which consciousness inheres: hence, our bodies are not the living being, nor is the matter in which the living being thinks. The living being may exist out of the body, may animate other bodies, and be as little affected by the dissolution of all these bodies, as of any other foreign matter (see note).

(Davison on Prophecy, p. 8), ascribe to it truths which it cannot claim. It is, moreover, at all times difficult to distinguish between the possible discoveries of reason and the "wisdom that is from above:" and good men are jealous of dishonouring the Holy Spirit by ascribing to unassisted reason what is due to his teaching. In studying this treatise, however, there need be no misgivings on these points. By natural religion Butler means simply such truths in relation to God (his character and government) and man (his duties and destiny) as *may* be learned from God's works and dealings—the pretensions of natural religion in this respect being set forth with much moderation and reserve. He holds, moreover, that, *in fact*, these truths were not learned in the first instance by unassisted reason, but that miraculous instruction was needed to teach men to perceive them (part ii., chap. vii.). At the same time such instruction no more destroys the proof of these truths from reason, than the admission of the authority of Euclid as a mathematician destroys the independent proof which reason gives of his demonstrations. Happily, if we admit an authentic and enlarged communication from God, our only business is to examine how far Nature leads us on in the same path, and how she confirms the evidence and illustrates the teaching of revelation.]

[2] [Though Butler reckons the doctrine of a future life among the truths of *natural* religion, he does so rather for the reasons stated

b Experimental: parts of the body (limbs) may be lost, the body be larger or smaller, or even entirely (though gradually) changed, and the *living being remain.* Note, moreover,

1 Even if man is material, still death may not destroy the elementary particles in which the living being inheres; and if not, death does not destroy him.

2 So, as the destruction of the *bodily* system (by gradual changes, by amputation) destroys not the living being, neither will the destruction of any other (say internal) system. Death, indeed, is a sudden not a gradual change, and the living being is affected by the body; but the first fact is not decisive, nor is the latter more true of the body than of other foreign matter that affects the soul.

3 The body has organs of perception, etc., which may be removed or destroyed without affecting the living being; so may all other organs—eye-glasses, wooden limbs—perception without organs, as in dreams. In these cases the organ is an instrument which may be laid aside; so the dissolution of matter or of organs is not the destruction of the being himself.

Obj. It may be objected, this applies to brutes, which must, therefore, be immortal, and moral too. To which answer,

a Be it so; brutes may have latent powers, which fit them to be immortal, and,

b It does not follow; brutes may have a natural immortality without any higher faculties; and God may dispose of them as he shall please.

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on p. 33, than from any conviction that the truth is taught clearly and impressively by Nature. A future life is *natural*, as he has shown; and yet if knowledge imply *proof* and *conviction*, then it must be admitted that, apart from revelation, there is no knowledge of that life, and that in the gospel alone it is revealed. Whately has proved the accuracy of this conclusion.—Essays on some of the Peculiarities of the Christian Religion, Essay I. At the same time the expectation of another life (sometimes hope, generally fear) has always been stronger among nations without the Bible than any *evidence* they seem to have possessed would warrant. This expectation Douglas ascribes partly to tradition, and partly to the aptitude of the soul to receive this truth.—Truths of Religion, p. 22. Cicero ascribes it to the same cause—*omnium consensus, naturæ vox* (Tusc. Quest., i., § 15)—though holding that the truth none but a god could tell, while what was likest truth was extremely uncertain.]

2 Is death the destruction (not of the *living being*, but) of our present living powers of reflection, as it is of those of sensation?
a Man lives in two states—sensation, and perception or reflection.
b Ideas once gained, sensation may be destroyed and reflection remain untouched; for now,
1 We can and do reflect independently of the senses; and,
2 In mortal diseases reflection is unaffected up to the moment of death, and after sensation has ceased.
c Each state, indeed, affects the other; but the destruction of one thing which affects another is not necessarily the destruction of the two.
d Diseases even give a presumption to the contrary (see **B** b 2).
3 Is death even the suspension of our present powers of reflection? No; for,
a Such suspension is no part of the idea of death, which is simply dissolution of the body.
b Death may be like birth, a continuation and perfecting of our powers; and,
c At all events, suspension of powers and destruction so differ, that we cannot argue the second from the first.
Obj. Death is after all our destruction, as is clear from vegetable decay. But the things compared differ in the essential point of comparison—the possession of living powers of *perception*.
Repeat conclusion in a positive form.
C The future life here shown to be probable is *natural:*
1 We *enter* it naturally, by a change like our birth.
2 It is naturally *social*.
3 Ruled by natural *fixed* laws, according to virtue.
4 Nor less natural that these laws are administered by God, not by men, etc.
D This probable proof of a future life helps religion as much as demonstration would do; for,
1 Demonstration would not silence an unbeliever in religion, since his unbelief may admit a future life as it admits this; and,
2 Probable proof silences objections, and prepares the mind to attend to the proper evidence of religion.]

Strange difficulties have been raised by some concerning personal identity, or the sameness of living agents, implied

in the notion of our existing now and hereafter, or in any A
two successive moments; which whoever thinks it worth while, may see considered in the first dissertation at the end of this treatise. But without regard to any of them here, let us consider what the analogy of Nature, and the several changes which we have undergone, and those which we know we may undergo without being destroyed, suggest, as to the effect which death may, or may not, have upon us; and whether it be not from thence probable, that we may survive
this change, and exist in a future state of life and perception. 1

[I.] From our being born into the present world in the helpless imperfect state of infancy, and having arrived from thence to mature age, we find it to be a general law of Nature
in our own species, that the same creatures, the same indi- a
viduals, should exist in degrees of life and perception, with capacities of action, of enjoyment and suffering, in one period of their being, greatly different from those appointed them in another period of it. And in other creatures the
same law holds. For the difference of their capacities and b
states of life at their birth (to go no higher) and in maturity; the change of worms into flies, and the vast enlargement of their locomotive powers by such change: and birds and insects bursting the shell their habitation, and by this means entering into a new world, furnished with new accommodations for them, and finding a new sphere of action assigned them; these are instances of this general law of Nature. Thus all the various and wonderful transformations of animals are to be taken into consideration here. But the states of life in which we ourselves existed formerly in the womb and in our infancy, are almost as different from our present in mature age, as it is possible to conceive any two states or degrees of life can be. Therefore that we are to exist hereafter in a state as different (suppose) from our present, as this is from our former, is but according to the analogy of Nature; according to a natural order or appointment of the very same kind, with what we have already experienced.

[II.] We know we are endued with capacities of action, of happiness and misery: for we are conscious of acting, of
enjoying pleasure and suffering pain. Now, that we have 2
these powers and capacities before death, is a presumption

that we shall retain them through and after death; indeed a probability of it abundantly sufficient to act upon, unless there be some positive reason to think that death is the destruction of those living powers; because there is in every case a probability that all things will continue as we experience they are, in all respects, except those in which we have some reason to think they will be altered. This is that *kind*[3] of presumption or probability from analogy, expressed in the very word *continuance*, which seems our only natural reason for believing the course of the world will continue to-morrow, as it has done so far as our experience or knowledge of history can carry us back. Nay it seems our only reason for believing, that any one substance now existing will continue to exist a moment longer; the self-existent substance only excepted. Thus if men were assured that the unknown event, death, was not the destruction of our faculties of perception and of action, there would be no apprehension, that any other power or event, unconnected with this of death, would destroy these faculties just at the instant of each creature's death, and therefore no doubt but that they would remain after it; which shows the high probability that our living powers will continue after death, unless there be some ground to think that death is their destruction.[4] For, if it would be in a manner certain that we should survive death, provided it were certain that death would not be our destruction, it must be highly probable we

[3] I say *kind* of presumption or probability; for I do not mean to affirm that there is the same *degree* of conviction that our living powers will continue after death, as there is that our substances will.

[4] *Destruction of living powers* is a manner of expression unavoidably ambiguous, and may signify either *the destruction of a living being, so as that the same living being shall be incapable of ever perceiving or acting again at all:* or *the destruction of those means and instruments by which it is capable of its present life, of its present state of perception and of action.* It is here used in the former sense. When it is used in the latter, the epithet *present* is added. The loss of a man's eye is a destruction of living powers in the latter sense. But we have no reason to think the destruction of living powers, in the former sense, to be possible. We have no more reason to think a being endued with living powers ever loses them during its whole existence, than to believe that a stone ever acquires them.

shall survive it, if there be no ground to think death will be our destruction.[5]

Now though I think it must be acknowledged, that prior to the natural and moral proofs of a future life commonly insisted upon, there would arise a general confused suspicion, that in the great shock and alteration which we shall undergo by death, we, *i. e.* our living powers, might be wholly destroyed: yet even prior to those proofs, there is really no particular distinct ground or reason for this apprehension at all, so far as I can find. If there be, it must arise either from *the reason of the thing*, or from *the analogy of Nature.*

But we cannot argue from *the reason of the thing*, that death a
is the destruction of living agents, because we know not at all what death is in itself; but only some of its effects, such as the dissolution of flesh, skin, and bones. And these effects do in no wise appear to imply the destruction of a living agent. And besides, as we are greatly in the dark upon what the exercise of our living powers depends, so we are wholly ignorant what the powers themselves depend upon; the powers themselves are distinguished, not only from their actual exercise, but also from the present capacity of exercising them, and as opposed to their destruction; for sleep, or however a swoon, shows us, not only that these powers exist when they are not exercised, as the passive power of motion does in inanimate matter, but shows also that they exist, when there is no present capacity of exercising them; or that the capacities of exercising them for the present, as well as the actual exercise of them, may be

[5] [The first and the second parts of this chapter illustrate very well the weakness and the strength of the analogical argument. For positive conclusions—the certainty, for example, of a future life—it fails to produce conviction. For negative conclusions—the futility, for example, of objections to a future life, founded on our fears, or on what death seems to be—it is triumphant. It is in reference to the first point in part that Dr. Chalmers holds this chapter "to be the least satisfactory in the book."—Lectures on Butler, p. 10. If, however, he adds, it be held as the main function of analogy not to supply-proofs, but to repel disproofs—then nothing can be imagined more effective or more beautiful than the illustrations of this part of Butler's work.]

suspended, and yet the powers themselves remain undestroyed. Since then we know not at all upon what the existence of our living powers depends, this shows further, there can no probability be collected from the reason of the thing, that death will be their destruction; because their existence may depend upon somewhat in no degree affected by death, upon somewhat quite out of the reach of this king
D of terrors. So that there is nothing more certain than that *the reason of the thing* shows us no connexion between death and the destruction of living agents. Nor can we find anything throughout the whole *analogy of Nature* to afford us even the slightest presumption that animals ever lose their living powers, much less, if it were possible, that they lose them by death; for we have no faculties wherewith to trace any beyond or through it, so as to see what becomes of them. This event removes them from our view. It destroys the *sensible* proof, which we had before their death, of their being possessed of living powers, but does not appear to afford the least reason to believe that they are then, or by that event, deprived of them.

And our knowing, that they were possessed of these powers, up to the very period to which we have faculties capable of tracing them, is itself a probability of their retaining them beyond it. And this is confirmed, and a sensible credibility is given to it, by observing the very great and astonishing changes which we have experienced; so great that our existence in another state of life, of perception, and of action, will be but according to a method of providential conduct, the like to which has been already exercised even with regard to ourselves, according to a course of Nature, the like to which we have already gone through.

However, as one cannot but be greatly sensible, how
E difficult it is to silence imagination enough to make the voice of reason even distinctly heard in this case; as we are accustomed from our youth up to indulge that forward delusive faculty, ever obtruding beyond its sphere; of some assistance indeed to apprehension, but the author of all error; as we plainly lose ourselves in gross and crude conceptions of things, taking for granted that we are acquainted with what, indeed, we are wholly ignorant of; it may be proper to consider the imaginary presumptions, that death will be

our destruction, arising from these kinds of early and lasting prejudices; and to show how little they can really amount to, even though we cannot wholly divest ourselves of them.[6] And,

[I.] All presumption of death's being the destruction of living beings, must go upon supposition that they are compounded, and so discerptible. But since consciousness is a single and indivisible power, it should seem that the subject in which it resides must be so too. For were the motion of any particle of matter absolutely one and indivisible, so as that it should imply a contradiction to suppose part of this motion to exist, and part not to exist, *i. e.* part of this matter to move, and part to be at rest; then its power of motion would be indivisible; and so also would the subject in which the power inheres, namely the particle of matter; for if this could be divided into two, one part might be moved and the other at rest, which is contrary to the supposition[7].

[6] [It must be carefully noted that the question here raised is divided by Butler into three: Is death the destruction of the *living* agent? or of his present powers of reflection? or is it even the suspension of those powers? See Outline. On the phraseology here employed, Dr. Hampden remarks that Butler "is often obliged to employ a circuitous and apparently awkward style in stating his arguments"—to avoid particular theories in relation to the subjects of them. "Hence his use of such expressions as 'faculties of perception and action,' 'living powers,' 'living agents,' etc., which, to be justly estimated, must be regarded as exclusions of any particular theory concerning the soul, so as to leave the question of a future life, as here entered into, purely a question of fact."—Essay on the Philosophical Evidences of Christianity. Pref. x.]

[7] [This argument—consciousness is indivisible, so therefore is the subject in which it inheres; but if the conscious subject is indivisible, it is also indestructible and immortal was stated in 1705 (thirty years before the Analogy was published), by Dr. S. Clarke, and in nearly the same words (A Discourse concerning the Truth and Certainty of the Christian Revelation, etc., Boyle's Lecture, p. 113). Dr. Thomas Brown has also expanded and enforced it with his usual eloquence (Lect. xcvi.) But it is now generally abandoned as inconclusive. Dugald Stewart intimates that if logical, it proves that the soul cannot have been *created*. It is clearer still that on this principle the elementary substances of Nature are indestructible. Mackintosh has remarked that *simple* properties some-

In like manner it has been argued,[8] and for anything appearing to the contrary justly, that since the perception or consciousness which we have of our own existence, is indivisible, so as that it is a contradiction to suppose one part of it should be here and the other there; the perceptive power, or the power of consciousness, is indivisible too; and consequently the subject in which it resides, *i. e.* the conscious being. Now upon supposition that living agent each man calls himself, is thus a single being, which there is at least no more difficulty in conceiving than in conceiving it to be a compound, and of which there is the proof now mentioned; it follows that our organized bodies are no more ourselves or part of ourselves than any other matter around us. And it is as easy to conceive how matter, which is no part of ourselves, may be appropriated to us in the manner which our present bodies are; as how we can receive impressions from, and have power over any matter. It is as easy to conceive that we may exist out of bodies, as in them; that we might have animated bodies of any other organs and senses wholly different from those now given us, and that we may hereafter animate these same or new bodies variously modified and organized, as to conceive how we can animate such bodies as our present. And lastly, the

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times exist in a compound substance, when not found in any of its constituent parts (Ethical Philosophy, p. 261, Whewell's ed.), whence it follows that the indivisibility of a property (as consciousness) is no proof of the indivisibility of the conscious substance. And, in a word, we know so little of the primary qualities or of the essence of matter and mind, that all reasoning based upon such knowledge is not only unsatisfactory, but peculiarly liable to be turned against the truth we are seeking to defend.—See Duke's Analysis of Butler, App. i.; Sir W. Hamilton's edition of Dr. Reid's Collected Works, Note D.]

[8] See Dr. Clarke's Letter to Mr. Dodwell, and the defences of it. [Dodwell, a learned nonjuror, fond of paradoxes, maintained that the human soul is naturally mortal, but is actually immortalized by God in baptism. He was answered by Clarke. Collins, the deist, then took up Dodwell's theory, dropping the theological question. A fourth letter, in reply, was written by Clarke, and so the dispute closed. All the letters were collected and published. The sixth and best edition is dated Lond., 1731. See also Hinton's Athanasia.]

dissolution of all these several organized bodies, supposing ourselves to have successively animated them, would have no more conceivable tendency to destroy the living beings ourselves, or deprive us of living faculties, the faculties of perception and of action, than the dissolution of any foreign matter, which we are capable of receiving impressions from and making use of for the common occasions of life.

[II.] The simplicity and absolute oneness of a living agent cannot indeed, from the nature of the thing, be properly proved by experimental observations. But as these *fall in* with the supposition of its unity, so they plainly lead us to *conclude* certainly that our gross organized bodies, with which we perceive the objects of sense, and with which we act, are no part of ourselves; and therefore show us that we have no reason to believe their destruction to be ours; even without determining whether our living substances be material or immaterial. For we see by experience that men may lose their limbs, their organs of sense, and even the greatest part of these bodies, and yet remain the same living agents. And persons can trace up the existence of themselves to a time when the bulk of their bodies was extremely small in comparison of what it is in mature age; and we cannot but think, that they might then have lost a considerable part of that small body, and yet have remained the same living agents; as they may now lose great part of their present body and remain so. And it is certain that the bodies of all animals are in a constant flux from that never-ceasing attrition, which there is in every part of them. Now things of this kind unavoidably teach us to distinguish between these living agents ourselves and large quantities of matter in which we are very nearly interested; since these may be alienated and actually are in a daily course of succession, and changing their owners, whilst we are assured that each living agent remains one and the same permanent being.[9] And this general observation leads us on to the following ones.

[9] [See Dissertation I., where the question of personal identity is formally discussed. In accordance with Butler's general practice, such discussions are excluded from his treatise, which is eminently practical. His phraseology is in the mean time as free from mere theory as possible.]

1 First. That we have no way of determining by experience what is the certain bulk of the living being each man calls himself; and yet till it be determined that it is larger in bulk than the solid elementary particles of matter, which there is no ground to think any natural power can dissolve, there is no sort of reason to think death to be the dissolution of it, of the living being, even though it should not be absolutely indiscerptible.

2 Secondly. From our being so nearly related to and interested in certain systems of matter, suppose our flesh and bones, and afterwards ceasing to be at all related to them, the living agents ourselves remaining all this while undestroyed notwithstanding such alienation; and consequently these systems of matter not being ourselves; it follows further that we have no ground to conclude any other, suppose *internal systems* of matter, to be the living agents ourselves, because we can have no ground to conclude this but from our relation to and interest in such other systems of matter; and therefore we can have no reason to conclude, what befalls those systems of matter at death, to be the destruction of the living agents. We have already several times over lost a great part or perhaps the whole of our body, according to certain common established laws of Nature, yet we remain the same living agents; when we shall lose as great a part, or the whole, by another common established law of Nature, death; why may we not always remain the same? That the alienation has been gradual in one case, and in the other will be more at once, does not prove anything to the contrary. We have passed undestroyed through those many and great revolutions of matter, so peculiarly appropriated to us ourselves; why should we imagine death will be so fatal to us? Nor can it be objected, that what is thus alienated or lost is no part of our original solid body, but only adventitious matter, because we may lose entire limbs which must have contained many solid parts and vessels of the original body; or if this be not admitted, we have no proof that any of these solid parts are dissolved or alienated by death. Though, by the way, we are very nearly related to that extraneous or adventitious matter, whilst it continues united to and distending the several parts of our solid body. But after all, the relation a person bears to

those parts of his body, to which he is the most nearly related, what does it appear to amount to but this, that the living agent, and those parts of the body, mutually affect each other? And the same thing, the same thing in kind though not in degree, may be said of *all foreign* matter, which gives us ideas, and which we have any power over. From these observations the whole ground of the imagination is removed, that the dissolution of any matter, is the destruction of a living agent, from the interest he once had in such matter.

Thirdly. If we consider our body somewhat more distinctly, as made up of organs and instruments of perception and of motion, it will bring us to the same conclusion. Thus the common optical experiments show, and even the observation how sight is assisted by glasses shows, that we see with our eyes in the same sense as we see with glasses. Nor is there any reason to believe, that we see with them in any other sense; any other, I mean, which would lead us to think the eye itself a percipient. The like is to be said of hearing; and our feeling distant solid matter by means of somewhat in our hand, seems an instance of the like kind as to the subject we are considering.[10] All these are instances of foreign matter, or such as is no part of our body, being instrumental in preparing objects for and conveying them to the perceiving power, in a manner similar or like to the manner in which our organs of sense prepare and convey them. Both are in a like way instruments of our receiving such ideas from external objects, as the Author of Nature appointed those external objects to be the occasions of exciting in us. However, glasses are evidently instances of this; namely of matter which is no part of our body, preparing objects for and conveying them towards the perceiving power, in like manner as our bodily organs do. And if we see with our eyes only in the same manner as we do with glasses, the like may justly be concluded, from analogy, of all our other senses. It is not intended by anything here said to affirm,

[10] [Fitzgerald quotes Plato, Alcib. Prim., s. 51, where the hands and eyes are distinguished as here from the *man* who uses them. "The mind sees, all else is deaf and blind," was a common Greek proverb.— Hamilton's Reid, p. 246.]

that the whole apparatus of vision, or of perception by any other of our senses, can be traced through all its steps quite up to the living power of seeing or perceiving; but that so far as it can be traced by experimental observations, so far it appears that our organs of sense prepare and convey on objects, in order to their being perceived, in like manner as foreign matter does, without affording any shadow of appearance that they themselves perceive. And that we have no reason to think our organs of sense percipients, is confirmed by instances of persons losing some of them, the living beings themselves, their former occupiers, remaining unimpaired. It is confirmed also by the experience of dreams; by which we find we are at present possessed of a latent and, what would otherwise be, an unimagined unknown power of perceiving sensible objects, in as strong and lively a manner without our external organs of sense as with them.

So also with regard to our power of moving, or directing motion by will and choice: upon the destruction of a limb this active power remains, as it evidently seems, unlessened; so as that the living being, who has suffered this loss, would be capable of moving as before, if it had another limb to move with. It can walk by the help of an artificial leg, just as it can make use of a pole or a lever, to reach towards itself and to move things beyond the length and the power of its natural arm; and this last it does in the same manner as it reaches and moves, with its natural arm things nearer and of less weight. Nor is there so much as any appearance of our limbs being endued with a power of moving or directing themselves; though they are adapted, like the several parts of a machine, to be the instruments of motion to each other, and some parts of the same limb to be instruments of motion to other parts of it.

Thus a man determines that he will look at such an object through a microscope; or being lame, suppose that he will walk to such a place with a staff a week hence. His eyes and his feet no more determine in these cases, than the microscope and the staff. Nor is there any ground to think they any more put the determination in practice, or that his eyes are the seers or his feet the movers, in any other sense than as the microscope and the staff are. Upon the whole

then our organs of sense and our limbs are certainly instruments, which the living persons ourselves make use of to perceive and move with; there is not any probability that they are any more, nor consequently that we have any other kind of relation to them, than what we may have to any other foreign matter formed into instruments of perception and motion, suppose into a microscope or a staff (I say any other kind of relation, for I am not speaking of the degree of it); nor consequently is there any probability that the alienation or dissolution of these instruments is the destruction of the perceiving and moving agent.

And thus our finding that the dissolution of matter, in which living beings were most nearly interested, is not their dissolution, and that the destruction of several of the organs and instruments of perception and of motion belonging to them is not their destruction, shows demonstratively that there is no ground to think that the dissolution of any other matter, or destruction of any other organs and instruments, will be the dissolution or destruction of living agents from the like kind of relation. And we have no reason to think we stand in any other kind of relation to any thing which we find dissolved by death.

But it is said these observations are equally applicable to brutes; and it is thought an insuperable difficulty that they should be immortal, and by consequence capable of everlasting happiness.[11] Now this manner of expression is both invidious and weak; but the thing intended by it is really no difficulty at all, either in the way of natural or

[11] [The question of the immortality of brutes long perplexed the early defenders of the immortality of the soul.—See Bayle's Dictionary, articles Pereira and Rorarius. Clarke (in his reply to Collins), Thomas Burnet, and Andrew Baxter, and now Butler, meets the difficulty in the true form. "Brutes may, for aught we know, become rational agents, as infants do. If not, the system of the universe may require the future existence of brutes, as it requires the present; and after all there are other and stronger arguments for the future life of man which do not hold equally in the case of brutes." This is in substance the answer of all. Perhaps a still sounder argument is—Analogy (as to death) shows only that our immortality is *not improbable:* so of brute natures. The positive proofs must be gathered from other quarters.]

moral consideration. For first, suppose the invidious thing,
designed in such a manner of expression, were really im-
plied, as it is not in the least, in the natural immortality of
brutes; namely, that they must arrive at great attainments,
and become rational and moral agents, even this would be
no difficulty; since we know not what latent powers and
a capacities they may be endued with. There was once, prior
to experience, as great presumption against human creatures
as there is against the brute creatures, arriving at that de-
gree of understanding which we have in mature age. For
we can trace up our own existence to the same original with
theirs. And we find it to be a general law of Nature, that
creatures endued with capacities of virtue and religion
should be placed in a condition of being, in which they are
altogether without the use of them for a considerable length
of their duration, as in infancy and childhood. And great
part of the human species go out of the present world,
before they come to the exercise of these capacities in any
degree at all. But then, secondly, the natural immortality
of brutes does not in the least imply that they are endued
with any latent capacities of a rational or moral nature.
And the economy of the universe might require, that there
b should be living creatures without any capacities of this
kind. And all difficulties as to the manner how they are
to be disposed of are so apparently and wholly founded in
our ignorance, that it is wonderful they should be insisted
upon by any, but such as are weak enough to think they
are acquainted with the whole system of things. There is
then absolutely nothing at all in this objection, which is so
rhetorically urged, against the greatest part of the natural
proofs or presumptions of the immortality of human minds:
I say the greatest part; for it is less applicable to the follow-
ing observation, which is more peculiar to mankind:

2 [III]. That as it is evident our *present* powers and capaci-
ties of reason, memory, and affection do not depend upon
our gross body in the manner in which perception by our
organs of sense does; so they do not appear to depend upon
it at all in any such manner, as to give ground to think that
the dissolution of this body will be the destruction of these
our *present* powers of reflection, as it will of our powers of

sensation; or to give ground to conclude, even that it will be so much as a suspension of the former.

Human creatures exist at present in two states of life and perception, greatly different from each other; each of which has its own peculiar laws, and its own peculiar enjoyments and sufferings. When any of our senses are affected or appetites gratified with the objects of them, we may be said to exist or live in a state of sensation. When none of our senses are affected or appetites gratified, and yet we perceive and reason, and act; we may be said to exist or live in a state of reflection. Now it is by no means certain, that any thing which is dissolved by death is any way necessary to the living being in this its state of reflection, after ideas are gained. For though, from our present constitution and condition of being, our external organs of sense are necessary for conveying in ideas to our reflecting powers, as carriages, and levers, and scaffolds are in architecture; yet when these ideas are brought in we are capable of reflecting in the most intense degree, and of enjoying the greatest pleasure and feeling the greatest pain, by means of that reflection, without any assistance from our senses; and without any at all, which we know of, from that body which will be dissolved by death. It does not appear then that the relation of this gross body to the reflecting being is, in any degree, necessary to thinking, to our intellectual enjoyments or sufferings; nor, consequently, that the dissolution or alienation of the former by death will be the destruction of those present powers, which render us capable of this state of reflection. Further, there are instances of mortal diseases which do not at all affect our present intellectual powers; and this affords a presumption that those diseases will not destroy these present powers. Indeed, from the observations made above,[14] it appears that there is no presumption, from their mutually affecting each other, that the dissolution of the body is the destruction of the living agent. And by the same reasoning, it must appear too that there is no presumption, from their mutually affecting each other, that the dissolution of the body is the destruction of our present reflecting powers; but instances of their not affecting each

[14] Pp. 24, 25, 26.

other afford a presumption of the contrary. Instar mortal diseases not impairing our present reflecting p evidently turn our thoughts even from imagining diseases to be the destruction of them. Several indeed greatly affect all our living powers, and at suspend the exercise of them, as for instance drow increasing till it ends in sound sleep; and from her might have imagined it would destroy them, till we by experience the weakness of this way of judging. the diseases now mentioned, there is not so much a shadow of probability to lead us to any such conclus to the reflecting powers which we have at present. those diseases, persons the moment before death app be in the highest vigour of life. They discover apprehe memory, reason, all entire, with the utmost force of tion; sense of a character, of shame and honour; ar highest mental enjoyments and sufferings, even to th gasp; and these surely prove even greater vigour of lif bodily strength does. Now what pretence is the thinking, that a progressive disease when arrived to s degree, I mean that degree which is mortal, will de those powers which were not impaired, which wer affected by it, during its whole progress quite up to degree? And if death by diseases of this kind is no destruction of our present reflecting powers, it will s be thought that death by any other means is.

3 It is obvious that this general observation may be ca on further; and there appears so little connexion bet our bodily powers of sensation, and our present powe reflection, that there is no reason to conclude that d which destroys the former, does so much as suspen exercise of the latter, or interrupt our *continuing* to ex the like state of reflection which we do now. For sus sion of reason, memory, and the affections which the cite, is no part of the idea of death, nor is implied in notion of it. And our daily experiencing these powe be exercised, without any assistance that we know of, those bodies which will be dissolved by death, and our ing often that the exercise of them is so lively to the these things afford a sensible apprehension that death ips be so much as a discontinuance of the exe

of these powers, nor of the enjoyments and sufferings which it implies.[13] So that our posthumous life, whatever there may be in it additional to our present, yet may not be entirely beginning anew, but going on. Death may, in some sort and in some respects, answer to our birth; which is not a suspension of the faculties which we had before it, or a total change of the state of life in which we existed when in the womb, but a continuation of both, with such and such great alterations.

Nay, for aught we know of ourselves, of our present life and of death; death may immediately, in the natural course of things, put us into a higher and more enlarged state of life as our birth does;[14] a state in which our capacities, and sphere of perception and of action, may be much greater than at present. For as our relation to our external organs of sense renders us capable of existing in our present state of sensation, so it may be the only natural hindrance to our existing, immediately and of course, in a higher state of reflection. The truth is, reason does not at all show us in what state death naturally leaves us. But were we sure that it would suspend all our perceptive and active powers, yet the suspension of a power and the destruction of it are

[13] There are three distinct questions relating to a future life here considered: Whether death be the destruction of living agents; if not, Whether it be the destruction of their *present* powers of reflection, as it certainly is the destruction of their present powers of sensation; and if not, Whether it be the suspension or discontinuance of the exercise of these present reflecting powers. Now, if there be no reason to believe the last, there will be, if that were possible, less for the next, and less still for the first.

[14] This, according to Strabo, was the opinion of the Brachmans, νομίζειν μὲν γὰρ δὴ τὸν μὲν ἐνθάδε βίον, ὡς ἂν ἀκμὴν κυομένων εἶναι· τὸν δὲ θάνατον, γένεσιν εἰς τὸν ὄντως βίον, καὶ τὸν εὐδαίμονα τοῖς φιλοσοφήσασι.—Lib. xv., p. 1039, ed. Amst., 1707. ["They considered the life which now is as an embryo state, and death as birth into true life—the perfect blessedness of philosophers."] To which opinion perhaps Antoninus may allude in these words: ὡς νῦν περιμένεις, πότε ἔμβρυον ἐκ τῆς γαστρὸς τῆς γυναικός σου ἐξέλθῃ, οὕτως ἐκδέχεσθαι τὴν ὥραν ἐν ᾗ τὸ ψυχάριόν σου τοῦ ἐλύτρου τούτου ἐκπεσεῖται.—Lib. ix., c. 3. ["As thou once camest, an embryo from the womb, so art thou now waiting for the hour when thy soul shall get free from its present integument."]

effects so totally different in kind, as we experience from sleep and a swoon, that we cannot in any wise argue from one to the other; or conclude even to the lowest degree of probability that the same kind of force which is sufficient to suspend our faculties, though it be increased ever so much, will be sufficient to destroy them.

Obj. These observations together may be sufficient to show, how little presumption there is, that death is the destruction of human creatures. However, there is the shadow of an analogy, which may lead us to imagine it is; the supposed likeness which is observed between the decay of vegetables, and of living creatures.[15] And this likeness is indeed sufficient to afford the poets very apt allusions to the flowers of the field, in their pictures of the frailty of our present life. But in reason, the analogy is so far from holding, that there appears no ground even for the comparison, as to the present question; because one of the two subjects compared is wholly void of that, which is the principal and chief thing in the other, the power of perception and of action; and which is the only thing we are inquiring about the continuance of. So that the destruction of a vegetable is an event not similar or analogous to the destruction of a living agent.

Concl. But if, as was above intimated, leaving off the delusive custom of substituting imagination in the room of experience, we would confine ourselves to what we do know and understand; if we would argue only from that, and from that form our expectations; it would appear at first sight, that as no probability of living beings ever ceasing to be so, can be concluded from the reason of the thing; so none can be collected from the analogy of Na-

[15] [Butler's answer to this objection is conclusive. The things are *not* analogous in the essential points of comparison. Vegetable life is not at all like the power of perception and action possessed by moral agents. It will be remembered, however, that between the death of the *body* and of vegetable substance there is some resemblance, and that the apostle Paul uses this resemblance to illustrate the resurrection of the dead: "The seed dies; the germ, however, remains, and gathers to itself the materials of a new frame," 1 Cor. xv. 36. There is a good explanation of this resemblance in Hitchcock's Sermons on the Seasons, Serm. 1.]

ture; because we cannot trace any living beings beyond death. But as we are conscious that we are endued with capacities of perception and of action, and are living persons; what we are to go upon is, that we shall continue so, till we foresee some accident or event, which will endanger those capacities, or be likely to destroy us: which death does in no wise appear to be.

And thus, when we go out of this world, we may pass C
into new scenes, and a new state of life and action, just as
naturally as we came into the present. And this new state 1
may naturally be a social one. And the advantages of it, 2
advantages of every kind, may naturally be bestowed, ac-
cording to some fixed general laws of wisdom, upon every 3
one in proportion to the degrees of his virtue. And though
the advantages of that future natural state should not be
bestowed, as these of the present in some measure are, by
the will of the society, but entirely by His more immediate
action, upon whom the whole frame of Nature depends; yet
this distribution may be just as natural, as their being dis- 4
tributed here by the instrumentality of men. And indeed, though one were to allow any confused undetermined sense, which people pleased to put upon the word *natural*, it would be a shortness of thought scarce credible, to imagine, that no system or course of things can be so, but only what we see at present:[1] especially whilst the probability of a future life, or the natural immortality of the soul, is admitted upon the evidence of reason; because this is really both admitting and denying at once, a state of being different from the present to be natural. But the only distinct meaning of that word is, *stated, fixed,* or *settled;* since what is natural, as much requires and presupposes an intelligent agent to render it so, *i. e.* to effect it continually, or at stated times; as what is supernatural or miraculous does to effect it for once. And from hence it must follow, that persons' notion of what is natural, will be enlarged in proportion to their greater knowledge of the works of God, and the dispensations of his providence. Nor is there any absurdity in supposing, that there may be beings in the universe, whose capacities, and knowledge, and views, may be so extensive,

[16] See Part II , chap. ii., and Part II., chap. iii.

as that the whole Christian dispensation may to them appear natural, *i. e.* analogous or conformable to God's dealings with other parts of his creation; as natural as the visible known course of things appears to us. For there seems scarce any other possible sense to be put upon the word, but that only in which it is here used; similar, stated, or uniform.

D This credibility of a future life, which has been here in-
sisted upon, how little soever it may satisfy our curiosity,
1 seems to answer all the purposes of religion, in like manner
as a demonstrative proof would. Indeed a proof, even a
demonstrative one, of a future life, would not be a proof of
religion. For, that we are to live hereafter, is just as re-
concilable with the scheme of atheism, and as well to be
accounted for by it, as that we are now alive is; and there-
fore nothing can be more absurd than to argue from that
scheme, that there can be no future state. But as religion
implies a future state, any presumption against such a state,
2 is a presumption against religion. And the foregoing obser-
vations remove all presumptions of that sort, and prove, to
a very considerable degree of probability, one fundamental
doctrine of religion; which if believed, would greatly open
and dispose the mind seriously to attend to the genera
evidence of the whole.

CHAPTER II.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD BY REWARDS AND PUNISHMENTS; AND PARTICULARLY OF THE LATTER.[1]

[INTRODUCTION. A future life is probable (chap. i.), and important, because (chap. ii.) our happiness in it may depend on our present conduct; *i.e.*, we are under government. Consider that we are under government generally; and, under government *by punishment*, as well as by rewards.

A Under government generally: *i. e.*,

1 Our present happiness and misery depend on our behaviour.

a Life is preserved through care.

b The possession of external good depends on exertion, and

c Enjoyment and misery are consequences of rashness, passion neglect, and their opposites.

Obj. 1 One may ask why, and wish that God had given happiness promiscuously, but, in answer, remember

a Such an arrangement may be impossible.

b The present plan may produce more happiness than any other.

c God's goodness may be a disposition to make (not all but only) the good happy.

d The *goodness* of moral agents may be more pleasing to God and better for the universe than mere happiness.

e The reason may be to us incomprehensible—as colours to the blind; and

[1] [Carefully mark that, in chap. ii., Butler is speaking of government simply, *not* of moral government, which is the subject of chap. iii." "Acts have consequences, and those consequences are foreseen," is the argument here: "*virtuous* acts have *happy* consequences, and those consequences are foreseen," is the argument in the *next* chapter. . . Professor Fitzgerald has appropriately remarked, that in the outset of this argument, we have an answer to all who regard religion as a mere *theory*. It belongs not to speculation, but to those practical matters on which our condition compels us to make up our minds one way or other. The Creator is not only the first Cause of all, he is moral Governor; and our eternal destiny is suspended upon our treatment of his claims.]

f At all events the *fact* is (whatever the reason), that happiness and misery do depend upon ourselves.

Obj. 2 One may object that these consequences of behaviour follow (and are therefore to be ascribed to) the course of Nature. Yes; but

a The *course of Nature* means *God* acting uniformly; and, if so, and our *foresight* of the course is his gift, then

b We ascribe all to God, and deem our foresight a warning and inducement given by him. It may be asked indeed,

c Whether, in every case, the pleasure following an act proves that God intended us so to act, and the answer is, No. It is a pleasant thing to behold the sun, and yet thereby the eye *may be* destroyed. The general truth, however, remains.

2 The knowledge that happiness depends on our behaviour is of the essence of government, which is simply annexing consequences to acts, and giving notice of the arrangement.

a Nor is it important that God should himself, and immediately execute his laws. They may execute themselves.

b Even the lesser pains and pleasures which follow acts are instances of proper government; nor can this be denied without denying all final causes, of which such pains are examples.

Conclusion. Hence, if told that God will reward and punish hereafter, still attaching consequences to acts, such a statement is in harmony with the whole present course of Nature, and so credible.

B We are under government by *punishment now*, and so may be *hereafter*.

1 Present punishments are analogous to future, of which religion (not only *revealed* but natural) speaks, in various respects:

a Both follow actions of present advantage or pleasure.

b They are often greater than the advantage or pleasure obtained by the acts they punish.

c They are often long delayed and yet come.

d They often come not gradually but suddenly.

e They are never *certainly* foreseen, and seldom thought of at the time of the act.

f Opportunities once lost are never recalled.

g They are often, after a time, beyond alleviation by repentance.

h They follow neglect or thoughtlessness as well as passion, and

i They are sometimes final and irremediable.

2 Further note concerning them

a That they are not accidental or occasional, but matters of daily experience.
b The present and the future are so analogous that both may be described in the same words. Prov. chap. i.
c So close is the analogy, that when once a future punishment is proved (by its proper evidence), nothing can so fully impress it on the mind as to note the facts above named.
d Present punishments, however, are not always, it must be admitted, in proportion to misbehaviour; still they are sufficient
 1 To answer objections founded either on the imagination that our frailty or temptation will excuse us; that we are *necessary* agents, and so guiltless; or that God is incapable of offence; and
 2 To create a serious apprehension of future punishment, and to rebuke presumption, scepticism, false security, and licentiousness.]

THAT which makes the question concerning a future life to be of so great importance to us, is our capacity of happiness and misery. And that which makes the consideration of it to be of so great importance to us, is the supposition of our happiness and misery hereafter, depending upon our actions here. Without this, indeed, curiosity could not but sometimes bring a subject, in which we may be so highly interested, to our thoughts; especially upon the mortality of others, or the near prospect of our own. But reasonable men would not take any further thought about hereafter, than what should happen thus occasionally to rise in their minds, if it were certain that our future interest no way depended upon our present behaviour; whereas on the contrary, if there be ground, either from analogy or any thing else, to think it does; then there is reason also for the most active thought and solicitude, to secure that interest; to behave so as that we may escape that misery, and obtain that happiness in another life, which we not only suppose ourselves capable of, but which we apprehend also is put in our own power. And whether there be ground for this last apprehension, certainly would deserve to be most seriously considered, were there no other INTRO.

proof of a future life and interest, than that presumptive
A one, which the foregoing observations amount to.
1 Now in the present state, all which we enjoy, and a great
part of what we suffer, *is put in our own power*. For plea-
sure and pain are the consequences of our actions; and
we are endued by the Author of our nature with capa-
cities of foreseeing these consequences. We find by expe-
a rience He does not so much as preserve our lives, exclusively
of our own care and attention, to provide ourselves with,
and to make use of, that sustenance, by which he has ap-
pointed our lives shall be preserved; and without which,
he has appointed, they shall not be preserved at all. And
in general we foresee, that the external things, which are
the objects of our various passions, can neither be obtained
b nor enjoyed, without exerting ourselves in such and such
manners: but by thus exerting ourselves, we obtain and
enjoy these objects, in which our natural good consists; or
by this means God gives us the possession and enjoyment of
them. I know not, that we have any one kind or degree of
enjoyment, but by the means of our own actions. And by
prudence and care, we may, for the most part, pass our
days in tolerable ease and quiet: or, on the contrary, we
may, by rashness, ungoverned passion, wilfulness, or even
c by negligence, make ourselves as miserable as ever we
please. And many do please to make themselves extremely
miserable, *i. e.* to do what they know beforehand will
render them so. They follow those ways, the fruit of which
they know, by instruction, example, experience, will be dis-
grace, and poverty, and sickness, and untimely death. This
every one observes to be the general course of things;
though it is to be allowed, we cannot find by experience,
that all our sufferings are owing to our own follies.

Obj. 1. Why the Author of Nature does not give his crea-
tures promiscuously such and such perceptions, without
regard to their behaviour; why he does not make them
happy without the instrumentality of their own actions,
and prevent their bringing any sufferings upon themselves;
a is another matter. Perhaps[2] there may be some impossibili-

[2] [‘*Perhaps.*’ In this paragraph “Butler makes a fine display of
true philosophic modesty. He undertakes no absolute defence of

ties in the nature of things, which we are unacquainted with.[3] Or less happiness, it may be, would upon the whole be produced by such a method of conduct, than is by the b
present. Or perhaps Divine goodness, with which, if I mistake not, we make very free in our speculations, may not be a bare single disposition to produce happiness; but c
a disposition to make the good, the faithful, the honest man happy. Perhaps an infinitely perfect Mind may be pleased, with seeing his creatures behave suitably to the nature which he has given them; to the relations which he has placed them in to each other; and to that, which they stand in to himself: that relation to himself, which, during their existence, is even necessary, and which is the most important one of all: perhaps, I say, an infinitely perfect Mind may be pleased with this moral piety of moral agents, in and for itself; as well as upon account of d
its being essentially conducive to the happiness of his creation. Or the whole end, for which God made, and thus governs the world, may be utterly beyond the e
reach of our faculties: there may be somewhat in it as impossible for us to have any conception of, as for a blind man to have a conception of colours. But however this be, it is certain matter of universal experience, that the general f
method of Divine administration is, forewarning us, or giving us capacities to foresee, with more or less clearness, that if we act so and so, we shall have such enjoyments, if so and so, such sufferings; and giving us those enjoyments, and making us feel those sufferings, in consequence of our actions.

God's administration, but proposes a series of conjectures, which, like the queries of Sir Isaac Newton, express rather the confessions of ignorance than any disposition to press into mysteries which are yet unknown to us."—*Chalmers' Lectures*, p. 18. For Butler's purpose this style of reasoning is as remarkable for wisdom as it is humble. Even philosophy, however, has not scrupled to affirm that the arrangement which makes our happiness dependent upon our behaviour is the best that could be devised (Leibnitz), and essential to our moral agency (Wayland). The Christian, with the Bible in his hand, maintains that this dependence, and even the sin which it brings with it, redounds to God's glory; that is, to the display of his love and holiness in the highest possible degree.]

[3] Chap. vii.

Obj. 2. "But all this is to be ascribed to the general course of Nature." True. This is the very thing which I am observing. It is to be ascribed to the general course of

a Nature: *i. e.* not surely to the words or ideas, course of *Nature*; but to Him who appointed it, and put things into it: or to a course of operation, from its uniformity or constancy, called natural;[4] and which necessarily implies an operating agent. For when men find themselves necessitated to confess an Author of Nature, or that God is the natural governor of the world; they must not deny this again, because his government is uniform; they must not deny that he does things at all, because he does them constantly; because the effects of his acting are permanent, whether his acting be so or not.[5] In short, every man, in every thing he does, naturally acts upon the forethought and

b apprehension of avoiding evil or obtaining good: and if the natural course of things be the appointment of God, and our natural faculties of knowledge and experience are given us by him; then the good and bad consequences which follow our actions, are his appointment, and our foresight of those consequences, is a warning given us by him, how we are to act.

[4] Chap. i. pp. 33, 34.

[5] [Butler here hints (as Professor Fitzgerald notes) at what is sometimes called the mechanical theory of the universe: a theory analogous to that of a *general* without a *particular* Providence. This theory maintains that the frame of the universe is a mechanism having its own fixed laws, and requiring no interposition on God's part beyond the original act of creation. The forces of Nature are, on this supposition, in material things themselves, as particular providence is, on a similar supposition, only general laws working out the destiny of individuals. Clarke (whom Butler seems to follow) denied the theory, in opposition to Leibnitz. Scripture is clearly against it, and (it may be added) modern science, in its investigations into the doctrine of causation, seems in favour of the conclusion, that the great forces of the universe are put forth immediately by God himself.

It must be carefully noted, however, that Butler thinks a world governed by forces imparted at first, and no longer needing direct interposition, may be as completely under God's government as if he were continually interposing. See p. 41. Herein he agrees with Leibnitz against Clarke. See Fitzgerald, note, p. 46.]

"Is the pleasure then, naturally accompanying every particular gratification of passion, intended to put us upon gratifying ourselves in every such particular instance, and as a reward to us for so doing?" No certainly. Nor is it to be said, that our eyes were naturally intended to give us the sight of each particular object, to which they do or can extend; objects which are destructive of them, or which, for any other reason, it may become us to turn our eyes from. Yet there is no doubt, but that our eyes were intended for us to see with. So neither is there any doubt, but that the foreseen pleasures and pains belonging to the passions, were intended, in general, to induce mankind to act in such and such manners.

Now from this general observation, obvious to every one, that God has given us to understand, he has appointed satisfaction and delight to be the consequence of our acting in one manner, and pain and uneasiness of our acting in another, and of our not acting at all; and that we find the consequences, which we were beforehand informed of, uniformly to follow; we may learn, that we are at present actually under his government in the strictest and most proper sense; in such a sense, as that he rewards and punishes us for our actions. An Author of Nature being supposed, it is not so much a deduction of reason, as a matter of experience, that we are thus under his government: under his government, in the same sense, as we are under the government of civil magistrates. Because the annexing pleasure to some actions, and pain to others, in our power to do or forbear, and giving notice of this appointment beforehand to those whom it concerns, is the proper formal notion of government. Whether the pleasure or pain which thus follows upon our behaviour be owing to the Author of Nature's acting upon us every moment which we feel it, or to his having at once contrived and executed his own part in the plan of the world, makes no alteration as to the matter before us. For if civil magistrates could make the sanctions of their laws take place, without interposing at all, after they had passed them; without a trial, and the formalities of an execution: if they were able to make their laws execute themselves, or every offender to execute them upon himself, we should be just in the same sense under their

government then as we are now, but in a much higher degree and more perfect manner. Vain is the ridicule with which one foresees some persons will divert themselves upon finding lesser pains considered as instances of Divine punish-
b ment. There is no possibility of answering or evading the general thing here intended, without denying all final causes. For final causes being admitted, the pleasures and pains now mentioned must be admitted too as instances of them. And if they are—if God annexes delight to some actions, and uneasiness to others, with an apparent design to induce us to act so and so, then he not only dispenses happiness and misery, but also rewards and punishes actions. If, for example, the pain which we feel upon doing what tends to the destruction of our bodies, suppose upon too near approaches to fire, or upon wounding ourselves, be appointed by the Author of Nature to prevent our doing what thus tends to our destruction, this is altogether as much an instance of his punishing our actions, and consequently of our being under his government, as declaring by a voice from heaven that if we acted so he would inflict such pain upon us, and inflicting it, whether it be greater or less.

CONCL. Thus we find,[6] that the true notion or conception of the Author of Nature is that of a master or governor, prior to the consideration of his moral attributes. The fact of our case, which we find by experience, is, that he actually exercises dominion or government over us at present, by rewarding and punishing us for our actions, in as strict and proper a sense of these words, and even in the same sense, as children, servants, subjects, are rewarded and punished by those who govern them.

And thus the whole analogy of Nature, the whole present course of things, most fully shows that there is nothing incredible in the general doctrine of religion, that God will

[6] [These two paragraphs give the argument of this part of the chapter. An economy—in which actions are followed by foreseen pleasures and pains, and which are therefore fitted to induce some acts and deter from others—is really a government: and that is the economy of this life. Nor is there anything unnatural or incredible in the supposition that such an economy will prevail in the life to come.]

reward and punish men for their actions hereafter: nothing incredible, I mean, arising out of the notion of rewarding and punishing. For the whole course of Nature is a present instance of his exercising that government over us, which implies in it rewarding and punishing.

But as Divine punishment is what men chiefly object against, and are most unwilling to allow, it may be proper to mention some circumstances in the natural course of punishments at present, which are analogous to what religion teaches us concerning a future state of punishment, indeed so analogous, that as they add a further credibility to it, so they cannot but raise a most serious apprehension of it in those who will attend to them.

It has been now observed, that such and such miseries naturally follow such and such actions of imprudence and wilfulness, as well as actions more commonly and more distinctly considered as vicious; and that these consequences, when they may be foreseen, are properly natural punishments annexed to such actions. For the general thing here insisted upon is not that we see a great deal of misery in the world, but a great deal which men bring upon themselves by their own behaviour, which they might have foreseen and avoided. Now the circumstances of these natural punishments particularly deserving our attention, are such as these:[7] That oftentimes they follow, or are inflicted in consequence of actions, which procure many present advantages, and are accompanied with much present pleasure; for

[7] [This paragraph on present and future punishments "presents us with one of the finest triumphs of the analogical argument, in which its power as a weapon of defence appears to great advantage—cutting down as with a *scythe* a whole army of objections which are most frequent in the mouths of adversaries, being not only plausible in themselves, but most formidable in point of effect, from a certain tone of generous denunciation against all arbitrary and tyrannical rule in which they are propounded. . . . They do not of themselves constitute the argument by which to uphold natural theology or the Christian revelation, but they level to the ground many of the strongest and likeliest defences which the enemies of religion have to rear in opposition to the argument."—*Chalmers*.]

instance, sickness and untimely death is the consequence o intemperance, though accompanied with the highest mirt
b and jollity: That these punishments are often much greate than the advantages or pleasures obtained by the actions c which they are the punishments or consequences: Tha though we may imagine a constitution of Nature in whic these natural punishments, which are in fact to follov would follow immediately upon such actions being done, c very soon after, we find on the contrary in our world, that the
c are often delayed a great while, sometimes even till lor after the actions occasioning them are forgot; so that tl constitution of Nature is such, that delay of punishment no sort nor degree of presumption of final impunity: Th after such delay, these natural punishments or miseri
d often come, not by degrees, but suddenly, with violence, a at once; however, the chief misery often does: That certainty of such distant misery following such actions never afforded persons, so perhaps during the actions th have seldom a distinct full expectation of its following;[a] a many times the case is only thus, that they see in gener or may see, the credibility, that intemperance, suppose, v
e bring after it diseases; civil crimes, civil punishmen when yet the real probability often is, that they sl escape; but things notwithstanding take their desti course, and the misery inevitably follows at its appoin time, in very many of these cases. Thus also though yo may be alleged as an excuse for rashness and folly, as be naturally thoughtless, and not clearly foreseeing all the c sequences of being untractable and profligate; this does hinder, but that these consequences follow, and are g vously felt throughout the whole course of mature Habits contracted even in that age, are often utter r and men's success in the world, not only in the com sense of worldly success, but their real happiness and mis depends in a great degree, and in various ways, upon manner in which they pass their youth; which conseque they for the most part neglect to consider, and perhaps dom can properly be said to believe, beforehand. It req also to be mentioned, that in numberless cases the na

[a] See Part ii. chap. vi.

course of things affords us opportunities for procuring advantages to ourselves at certain times, which we cannot procure when we will, nor ever recall the opportunities, if f
we have neglected them. Indeed the general course of Nature is an example of this. If, during the opportunity of youth, persons are indocile and self-willed, they inevitably suffer in their future life, for want of those acquirements which they neglected the natural season of attaining. If the husbandman lets his seed-time pass without sowing, the whole year is lost to him beyond recovery. In like manner, though after men have been guilty of folly and extravagance *up to a certain degree*, it is often in their power, for instance, to retrieve their affairs, to recover their health and character, at least in good measure: yet real reformation is, in many cases, of no avail at all towards preventing the miseries, poverty, sickness, infamy, naturally annexed to folly and extra- g
vagance *exceeding that degree*. There is a certain bound to imprudence and misbehaviour, which being transgressed, there remains no place for repentance in the natural course of things. It is further very much to be remarked, that h
neglects from inconsiderateness, want of attention,* not looking about us to see what we have to do, are often attended with consequences altogether as dreadful as any active misbehaviour from the most extravagant passion. And lastly, civil government being natural, the punishments of i
it are so too: and some of these punishments are capital, as the effects of a dissolute course of pleasure are often mortal. So that many natural punishments are final** to him who

* Chap. vi. part ii.

** The general consideration of a future state of punishment most evidently belongs to the subject of natural religion. But if any of these reflections should be thought to relate more peculiarly to this doctrine, as taught in Scripture, the reader is desired to observe, that Gentile writers, both moralists and poets, speak of the future punishment of the wicked, both as to the duration and degree of it, in a like manner of expression and of description, as the Scripture does. So that all which can positively be asserted to be matter of mere revelation with regard to this doctrine, seems to be, that the great distinction between the righteous and the wicked, shall be made at the end of this world; that each shall *then* receive according to his deserts. Reason did,

incurs them, if considered only in his temporal capacity, and seem inflicted by natural appointment, either to remove the offender out of the way of being further mischievous, or as an example, though frequently a disregarded one, to those who are left behind.

2 These things are not what we call accidental, or to be met
a with only now and then, but they are things of every day's experience: they proceed from general laws, very general ones, by which God governs the world in the natural course
b of his providence. And they are so analogous to what religion teaches us concerning the future punishment of the wicked, so much of a piece with it, that both would naturally be expressed in the very same words and manner of description. In the book of *Proverbs*,[u] for instance, Wisdom is introduced as frequenting the most public places of resort, and as rejected when she offers herself as the natural appointed guide of human life. *How long*, speaking to those who are passing through it, *how long, ye simple ones, will ye love simplicity? and the scorners delight in their scorning, and fools hate knowledge? Turn you at my reproof: behold, I will pour out my spirit unto you, I will make known my words unto you.* But upon being neglected, *Because I have called, and ye refused; I have stretched out my hand, and no man regarded; but ye have set at nought all my counsel, and would none of my reproof: I also will laugh at your calamity; I will mock when your fear cometh; when your fear cometh as desolation, and your destruction cometh as a whirlwind; when distress and anguish cometh upon you. Then shall they call upon me, but*

as it well might, conclude that it should, finally and upon the whole, be well with the righteous, and ill with the wicked: but it could not be determined upon any principles of reason, whether human creatures might not have been appointed to pass through other states of life and being, before that distributive justice should finally and effectually take place. Revelation teaches us that the next state of things after the present is appointed for the execution of this justice; that it shall be no longer delayed; but *the mystery of God*, the great mystery of his suffering vice and confusion to prevail, *shall then be finished;* and he will *take to him his great power and will reign*, by rendering to every one according to his works. [See Lucretius, i. 107—112.]

u Chap. i.

I will not answer; they shall seek me early, but they shall not find me. This passage, every one sees, is poetical, and some parts of it are highly figurative; but their meaning is obvious. And the thing intended is expressed more literally in the following words: *For that they hated knowledge, and did not choose the fear of the Lord:—therefore shall they eat of the fruit of their own way, and be filled with their own devices. For the security of the simple shall slay them, and the prosperity of fools shall destroy them.* And the whole passage is so equally applicable to what we experience in the present world concerning the consequences of men's actions, and to what religion teaches us is to be expected in another, that it may be questioned which of the two was principally intended.

Indeed when one has been recollecting the proper proofs c
of a future state of rewards and punishments, nothing methinks can give one so sensible an apprehension of the latter, or representation of it to the mind, as observing, that after the many disregarded checks, admonitions and warnings, which people meet with in the ways of vice and folly and extravagance; warnings from their very nature; from the examples of others; from the lesser inconveniences which they bring upon themselves; from the instructions of wise and virtuous men: after these have been long despised, scorned, ridiculed; after the chief bad consequences, temporal consequences of their follies, have been delayed for a great while, at length they break in irresistibly, like an armed force: repentance is too late to relieve, and can serve only to aggravate their distress: the case is become desperate; and poverty and sickness, remorse and anguish, infamy and death, the effects of their own doings, overwhelm them beyond possibility of remedy or escape. This is an account of what is in fact the general constitution of Nature.

It is not in any sort meant, that according to what appears d
at present of the natural course of things, men are always uniformly punished in proportion to their misbehaviour: but that there are very many instances of misbehaviour punished in the several ways now mentioned, and very dreadful instances too, sufficient to show what the laws of the universe may admit; and, if thoroughly considered, sufficient fully to answer all objections against the credibility

of a future state of punishments, from any imaginations that the frailty of our nature and external temptations almost annihilate the guilt of human vices; as well as objections of another sort, from necessity; from suppositions that the will of an infinite Being cannot be contradicted, or that he must be incapable of offence and provocation.[12]

Reflections of this kind are not without their terrors to serious persons, the most free from enthusiasm, and of the greatest strength of mind; but it is fit things be stated and considered as they really are. And there is, in the present age, a certain fearlessness with regard to what may be hereafter under the government of God, which nothing but an universally acknowledged demonstration on the side of atheism can justify; and which makes it quite necessary that men be reminded, and if possible made to feel, that there is no sort of ground for being thus presumptuous, even upon the most sceptical principles. For, may it not be said of any person upon his being born into the world, he may behave so as to be of no service to it, but by being made an example of the woful effects of vice and folly? That he may, as any one may, if he will, incur an infamous execution from the hands of civil justice; or in some other course of extravagance shorten his days; or bring upon himself infamy and diseases worse than death? So that it had been better for him, even with regard to the present world, that he had never been born. And is there any pretence of reason for people to think themselves secure, and talk as if they had certain proof that, let them act as licentiously as they will, there can be nothing analogous to this, with regard to a future and more general interest, under the providence and government of the same God?

CHAPTER III.*

OF THE MORAL GOVERNMENT OF GOD.

[In chapter ii. the fact of *natural* government was proved. Here it is intended to prove that we are under *moral* government.

[12] See chap. iv. and vi.

A Introductory remarks on moral government generally, and the evidence to be adduced.

1 *Moral* government implies the rewarding of *virtue* and the punishment of vice; perfect moral government, an exact distribution of each.

2 Some hold that the character of God is that of *simple benevolence.* But this is not probable; for

a This supposes that moral conduct is not regarded for its own sake, and so gives no place for *veracity* and justice, except as forms of benevolence;

b And though perhaps God is purely benevolent to holy beings, yet he is *to us* as we see, a Governor, and so a moral one.

3 It is admitted that the moral government of God here is not perfect. The business of this chapter is to ascertain how far it exists, and what are likely to be its results.

4 It is not intended to reason here from the presages of conscience, nor from the nature of things, nor from the greater degree of happiness of virtue over vice (which it is difficult to estimate), but on other grounds.

B A moral government, present and future, is argued from the following facts:

1 God is a Governor, as we have seen (ch. ii.), and so probably a moral Governor. Such a conclusion at least falls in with our sense of things.

2 Prudence and imprudence (lower forms of virtue and vice), are rewarded and punished; and this is a moral arrangement.

3 Vice is punished, as mischievous to society, by penalties, and by the fear of them (itself a kind of punishment).

a This punishment, moreover, is natural; and

b Of God's appointment; and though

c It may be objected to that sometimes good actions are punished (as in persecution): yet note

1 That such punishment is in no sense necessary to society, and so not natural; and

2 Good actions are never punished, considered as such, but through mistake, as the contrary.

4 Vice is punished *as vice*, and virtue rewarded *as virtue.* Where note

a This statement implies that an action may have one effect, and the *quality* of an action another (gain, for example, as gain, brings pleasure: gain, as dishonest gain, brings misery).

b It affirms that virtue brings advantages to the virtuous, and vice evils to the vicious; and the following are examples.

1 In our own temper virtue produces peace; vice, vexation and self-reproach; and that these feelings are owing to the quality of the actions is plain; for, etc.

2 Nor ought the *present* fear of future punishment to be left out of this view, and the present peace in prospect of future happiness.

3 In common life, also, virtue has rewards, and vice punishment; a virtuous man being befriended because of his character, and in public life advantages are the natural rewards of fidelity, patriotism, etc., as such; while external annoyances often follow vice.

4 In domestic government, children and others are rewarded for veracity, etc., as such; and punished for falsehood, as such.

5 In civil government, though law regards actions chiefly, yet the viciousness of the actor, or the opposite, will often secure the infliction of the penalty, or induce men to remit it.

c The conclusion to which these facts lead is that, as our moral nature is a proof that we are under moral government, and will be finally treated as responsible, so examples justify this reasoning, and prove an existing moral government now.

d If it be asked, whence it is that virtue is rewarded and vic punished, and that this rule is not reversed, answer, it i because

1 Virtue brings present satisfaction to our own minds; an

2 With this moral nature God has made our happines depend largely upon one another; so that vice, bein infamous, brings punishment. Nor is there any suc regard for injustice and falsehood as for their opposite If examples can be quoted to the contrary, they are fe by all to be monstrous perversions.

e Not, indeed, that the degrees of reward given to virtue a always proportionate to it; but *it is* rewarded, and vi punished; so much is clear.

f It is admitted, also, that sometimes happiness and mise are distributed according to *other rules*. But this is e plained; for, 1, It may be as mere discipline. 2, It may the result of the operation of general laws, which m render persons prosperous, though wicked. 3, It is, aft all, not a natural arrangement, since we intuitively exp the opposite. 4, It will be found to be owing, in m cases, to the perversion of some passion.

g From the whole it is plain that this arrangement is a declaration, upon God's part, that he is on the side of virtue, which assurance is itself a fresh source of comfort to the good man.

5 In the nature of things there is a tendency in virtue and vice to *greater* rewards and punishments than at present; which tendencies are a strong argument in favour of a perfect moral government *in the future.*

This tendency is seen in *individuals*; for virtue would be more fully rewarded, and vice punished, but for accidental causes; and in *society*, where power under the direction of virtue has a tendency to prevail over power not under its direction; as power with reason is stronger than power without it. This, however, needs to be explained.

a Power with reason will conquer power without it, not necessarily, but commonly, under certain conditions;

1, There must be some proportion between the two powers. 2, Union among those who possess rational power. 3, Time and scope for the development of rational power. Sometimes, however, want of reason will succeed. 4, From its inability to foresee danger. 5, From its attempting, through ignorance, what prudence would avoid. 6, From certain conjunctures of weakness and discord. 7, From the force of a union based upon instinct, and free from the divisions which the passions of rational beings sometimes produce.

b So, with regard to virtue, it has a tendency to prevail through the union of the good for the sake of justice and veracity.

That this tendency is natural, and the hindrances to it accidental, may be shown, either

1 By looking at the *whole universe*, where, the visible and the invisible being supposed analogous, virtue will finally prevail; as is shown by the analogous case of reason; provided, however, the same conditions be fulfilled. See above, a, 1, 2, 3 7.

Obj. This tendency, indeed, is hindered, but it is by causes which are accidental, and are likely to be removed in a future state, which will give the requisite scope for the operation of virtue, etc.

This supposition of a boundless universe, and virtue triumphant throughout, is only a supposition, but it is credible.

2 Or by looking at a human society, perfectly virtuous and united, and working for a succession of ages (indefinite time, not as before, indefinite space).

(a) At home, such a society would certainly prosper; and
(b) Abroad, it would become the basis of a universal kingdom.

c Hence these tendencies are a distinct testimony, upon God's part, to morality and virtue; a testimony of great importance, if it be considered what the effect would be if vice had the advantageous tendency of virtue, and virtue the opposite.

C The application of this analogy to a future moral government is obvious. It may, indeed, be objected at the outset

a That good and evil may hereafter be mixed as now: Answer, 1, The nature of that future life belongs to religion, which it is not here intended to prove, but only to confirm the proper proof of it. 2, Even if these facts did not confirm that proof, the proof itself remains in all its force.

b But these facts confirm the proper proof of religion in various ways. 1, They show that God is in favour of virtue, and against vice. 2, They show that future perfect moral government will be the completion of what has already begun; differing from the present, not in kind, but only in degree. 3, They give reason to a hope that virtue MA more highly rewarded, and vice more severely punis in the next life than in this; and they even, 4, reason to conclude that these rewards and punishm *will* exist in a higher degree than here.

D On the whole, conclude that, besides arguments drawn from moral nature, the eternal relations of things, the fitness actions, there are arguments for a present moral governme and for a future perfect moral government, based upon fa B 1—5. The notion, therefore, of such a future government natural, and even probable.]

As the manifold appearances of design and of final causes, the constitution of the world, prove it to be the work of a intelligent Mind; so the particular final causes of pleasu and pain distributed amongst his creatures, prove that the are under his government; what may be called his natura government of creatures, endued with sense and reaso This, however, implies somewhat more than seems usuall attended to, when we speak of God's natural government of the world. It implies government of the very same kind

with that, which a master exercises over his servants, or a civil magistrate over his subjects. These latter instances of final causes, as really prove an intelligent *Governor* of the world, in the sense now mentioned, and before[1] distinctly treated of; as any other instances of final causes prove an intelligent *Maker* of it.

But this alone does not appear at first sight to determine
any thing certainly, concerning the moral character of the
Author of Nature, considered in this relation of governor;
does not ascertain his government to be moral, or prove that
he is the righteous Judge of the world. Moral government 1
consists, not barely in rewarding and punishing men for their
actions, which the most tyrannical person may do: but in
rewarding the righteous and punishing the wicked; in rendering to men according to their actions, considered as good
or evil. And the perfection of moral government consists in
doing this, with regard to all intelligent creatures, in an
exact proportion to their personal merits or demerits.

Some men seem to think the only character of the Author 2
of Nature to be that of simple absolute benevolence. This,
considered as a principle of action and infinite in degree, is
a disposition to produce the greatest possible happiness,
without regard to persons' behaviour, otherwise than as such
regard would produce higher degrees of it. And supposing
this to be the only character of God, veracity and justice in
him would be nothing but benevolence conducted by wisdom.
Now surely this ought not to be asserted, unless it can be
proved; for we should speak with cautious reverence upon 3
such a subject. And whether it can be proved or no, is not
the thing here to be inquired into; but whether in the constitution and conduct of the world, a righteous government
be not discernibly planned out, which necessarily implies a
righteous governor. There may possibly be in the creation,
beings, to whom the Author of Nature manifests himself
under this most amiable of all characters, this of infinite 4
absolute benevolence; for it is the most amiable, supposing
it not, as perhaps it is not, incompatible with justice: but
he manifests himself to us under the character of a righteous
Governor. He may, consistently with this, be simply and

[1] Chap. II.

absolutely benevolent, in the sense now explained: but he is, for he has given us a proof in the constitution and conduct of the world that he is a Governor over servants, as he rewards and punishes us for our actions. And in the constitution and conduct of it, he may also have given, besides the reason of the thing, and the natural presages of conscience, clear and distinct intimations, that his government is righteous or moral: clear to such as think the nature of it deserving their attention; and yet not to every careless person, who casts a transient reflection upon the subject.[2]

3 But it is particularly to be observed, that the Divine government, which we experience ourselves under in the present state, taken alone, is allowed not to be the perfection of moral government. And yet this by no means hinders, but that there may be somewhat, be it more or less, truly moral in it. A righteous government may plainly appear to be carried on to some degree: enough to give us the apprehension that it shall be completed, or carried on to that degree of perfection which religion teaches us it shall; but which cannot appear, till much more of the Divine administration be seen, than can in the present life. And the design of this chapter is to inquire how far this is the case: how far, over and above the moral nature[3] which God has given us, and our natural notion of him as righteous governor of those his creatures, to whom he has given this nature;[4] I say how far besides this, the principles and beginnings of a moral government over the world may be discerned, notwithstanding and amidst all the confusion and disorder of it.

4 Now one might mention here, what has been often urged

[2] The objections against religion, from the evidence of it not being universal, nor so strong as might possibly have been, may be urged against natural religion, as well as against revealed. And, therefore, the consideration of them belongs to the first part of this Treatise, as well as the second. But as these objections are chiefly urged against revealed religion, I chose to consider them in the second part. And the answer to them there, chap. vi., as urged against Christianity, being almost equally applicable to them as urged against the religion of Nature; to avoid repetition, the reader is referred to that chapter.

[3] Dissertation II., [and Sermons on Human Nature.]

[4] Chap. vi.

with great force, that in general, less uneasiness and more satisfaction, are the natural consequences[a] of a virtuous than of a vicious course of life, in the present state, as an instance of a moral government established in Nature; an instance of it, collected from experience and present matter of fact. But it must be owned a thing of difficulty to weigh and balance pleasures and uneasinesses, each amongst themselves, and also against each other, so as to make an estimate with any exactness, of the overplus of happiness on the side of virtue. And it is not impossible, that, amidst the infinite disorders of the world, there may be exceptions to the happiness of virtue; even with regard to those persons, whose course of life from their youth up has been blameless; and more with regard to those who have gone on for some time in the ways of vice, and have afterwards reformed. For suppose an instance of the latter case; a person with his passions inflamed, his natural faculty of self-government impaired by habits of indulgence, and with all his vices about him, like so many harpies, craving for their accustomed gratification: who can say how long it might be, before such a person would find more satisfaction in the reasonableness and present good consequences of virtue, than difficulties and self-denial in the restraints of it? Experience also shows, that men can, to a great degree, get over their sense of shame, so as that by professing themselves to be without principle, and avowing even direct villany, they can support themselves against the infamy of it. But as the ill actions of any one will probably be more talked of, and oftener thrown in his way, upon his reformation; so the infamy of them will be much more felt, after the natural sense of virtue and of honour is recovered. Uneasiness of this kind ought indeed to be put to the account of former vices: yet it will be said, they are in part the consequences of reformation. Still I am far from allowing it doubtful, whether virtue, upon the whole, be happier than

[a] See Lord Shaftesbury's Inquiry concerning Virtue, Part II. [Lord Shaftesbury's demonstration of the utility of virtue to the individual is one of the most conclusive ever given, being founded not on outward advantage, but on the inward delight which is the very essence of affection and moral excellence. Love is its own reward and hatred its own punishment: a sentiment expanded by Dr. Chalmers. Bridgew. Treat., p. 1, c. ii.]

vice in the present world. But if it were, yet the beginnings of a righteous administration may beyond all question be found in Nature, if we will attentively inquire after them. And,

8 I. In whatever manner the notion of God's moral govern-
1 ment over the world might be treated, if it did not appear, whether he were in a proper sense our Governor at all: yet when it is certain matter of experience, that he does manifest himself to us under the character of a Governor, in the sense explained;[6] it must deserve to be considered, whether there be not reason to apprehend, that he may be a righteous or moral Governor. Since it appears to be fact, that God does govern mankind by the method of rewards and punishments, according to some settled rules of distribution, it is surely a question to be asked, What presumption is there against his finally rewarding and punishing them according to this particular rule, namely, as they act reasonably or unreasonably, virtuously or viciously? since rendering men happy or miserable by this rule, certainly falls in, much more falls in, with our natural apprehensions and sense of things, than doing so by any other rule whatever: since rewarding and punishing actions by any other rule, would appear much harder to be accounted for, by minds formed as he has formed ours. Be the evidence of religion then more or less clear, the expectation which it raises in us, that the righteous shall, upon the whole, be happy, and the wicked miserable, cannot, however, possibly be considered as absurd or chimerical; because it is no more than an expectation, that a method of government already begun, shall be carried on, the method of rewarding and punishing actions; and shall be carried on by a particular rule, which unavoidably appears to us at first sight more natural than any other, the rule which we call distributive justice. Nor,

2 II. Ought it to be entirely passed over, that tranquillity, satisfaction, and external advantages, being the natural consequences of prudent management of ourselves, and our affairs; and rashness, profligate negligence, and wilful folly, bringing after them many inconveniences and sufferings; these afford instances of a right constitution of Nature: as the correction of children, for their own sakes, and by way

[6] Chapter ii.

of example, when they run into danger or hurt themselves, is a part of right education. And thus, that God governs the world by general fixed laws, that he has endued us with capacities of reflecting upon this constitution of things, and foreseeing the good and bad consequences of our behaviour; plainly implies some sort of moral government: since from such a constitution of things it cannot but follow, that prudence and imprudence, which are of the nature of virtue and vice,[7] must be, as they are, respectively rewarded and punished.

III. From the natural course of things, vicious actions are, to a great degree, actually punished as mischievous to society; and besides punishment actually inflicted upon this account, there is also the fear and apprehension of it in those persons whose crimes have rendered them obnoxious to it, in case of a discovery; this state of fear being itself often a very considerable punishment. The natural fear and apprehension of it too, which restrains from such crimes, is a declaration of Nature against them. It is necessary to the very being of society, that vices destructive of it, should be punished *as being so*: the vices of falsehood, injustice, cruelty: which punishment therefore is as natural as society; and so is an instance of a kind of moral government, naturally established, and actually taking place. And, since the certain natural course of things is the conduct of Providence or the government of God, though carried on by the instrumentality of men; the observation here made amounts to this, that mankind find themselves placed by him in such circumstances, as that they are unavoidably accountable for their behaviour, and are often punished, and sometimes rewarded under his government, in the view of their being mischievous, or eminently beneficial to society. 3 a b

If it be objected that good actions, and such as are beneficial to society, are often punished, as in the case of persecution and in other cases; and that ill and mischievous actions are often rewarded:[8] It may be answered distinctly; first, that this is in no sort necessary, and consequently not c

[7] See Dissertation II.

[8] [Not only are ill actions sometimes rewarded, but before Butler's time Mandeville had maintained that certain private vices (as luxury, vanity, ostentation, etc.) are public benefits. It is even

1 natural, in the sense in which it is necessary, and therefore
natural, that ill or mischievous actions should be punished:
and in the next place, that good actions are never punished,
2 considered as beneficial to society, nor ill actions rewarded,
under the view of their being hurtful to it. So that it stands
good, without anything on the side of vice to be set over
against it, that the Author of Nature has as truly directed,
that vicious actions, considered as mischievous to society,
should be punished, and put mankind under a necessity of
thus punishing them; as he has directed and necessitated
us to preserve our lives by food.

4 IV. In the natural course of things, virtue *as such* is ac-
tually rewarded, and vice *as such* punished: which seems to
afford an instance or example, not only of government, but
of moral government, begun and established; moral in the
strictest sense; though not in that perfection of degree,
which religion teaches us to expect. In order to see this
a more clearly, we must distinguish between actions them-
selves, and that quality ascribed to them, which we call
virtuous or vicious. The gratification itself of every natural
passion must be attended with delight: and acquisitions of
fortune, however made, are acquisitions of the means or
materials of enjoyment. An action then, by which any
natural passion is gratified or fortune acquired, procures de-
light or advantage; abstracted from all consideration of the
morality of such action. Consequently, the pleasure or ad-
vantage in this case, is gained by the action itself, not by the
morality, the virtuousness or viciousness of it; though it be,
perhaps, virtuous or vicious. Thus, to say such an action or
course of behaviour, procured such pleasure or advantage,
or brought on such inconvenience and pain, is quite a diffe-
rent thing from saying that such good or bad effect was

sometimes said that without luxury art would find no encourage-ment, and labour, in many departments, no reward. Warburton (Divine Legation, Bk. 1, § 6) and others (Law, Browne on the Characteristics, Whately, Pol. Ec.) have formally refuted this notion. But even if it be admitted, Butler's reasoning is still just. These vices are not rewarded as hurtful to society, but on the supposition that they are useful to it. Mandeville deems the vice of luxury a benefit, only because he thinks it conducive to poverty, and poverty to morality (Whately, Pol. Ec., p. 48); a confirmation, it will be noticed, of Butler's statement.]

owing to the virtue or vice of such action or behaviour. In one case, an action abstracted from all moral consideration, produced its effect: in the other case, for it will appear that there are such cases, the morality of the action, the action under a moral consideration, *i. e.* the virtuousness or viciousness of it, produced the effect. Now I say virtue as such, naturally procures considerable advantages to the virtuous, and vice as such, naturally occasions great inconvenience and even misery to the vicious in very many instances. The immediate effects of virtue and vice upon the mind and temper, are to be mentioned as instances of it. Vice as such is naturally attended with some sort of uneasiness, and, not uncommonly, with great disturbance and apprehension. That inward feeling, which, respecting lesser matters, and in familiar speech, we call being vexed with oneself, and in matters of importance and in more serious language, remorse; is an uneasiness naturally arising from an action of a man's own, reflected upon by himself as wrong, unreasonable, faulty, *i. e.* vicious in greater or less degrees: and this manifestly is a different feeling from that uneasiness, which arises from a sense of mere loss or harm. What is more common, than to hear a man lamenting an accident or event, and adding — but however he has the satisfaction that he cannot blame himself for it; or on the contrary, that he has the uneasiness of being sensible it was his own doing? Thus also the disturbance and fear, which often follow upon a man's having done an injury, arise from a sense of his being blameworthy; otherwise there would, in many cases, be no ground of disturbance, nor any reason to fear resentment or shame.[a] On the other hand, inward security and peace, and a mind open to the several gratifications of life, are the natural attendants of innocence and virtue. To which must be added the complacency, satisfaction, and even joy of heart, which accompany the exercise, the real exercise, of gratitude, friendship, benevolence.

And here, I think, ought to be mentioned the fears of future punishment, and peaceful hopes of a better life, in

[a] [Pagan writers frequently refer to the effects of a sense of guilt. See Lucr. iii. 1024—1035. So Plato, Resp. i. § 5. See Homer, Il., 2. 200.]

those who fully believe, or have any serious apprehensions of religion: because these hopes and fears are present uneasiness and satisfaction to the mind, and cannot be got rid of by great part of the world, even by men who have thought most thoroughly upon that subject of religion. And no one can say how considerable this uneasiness and satisfaction may be, or what upon the whole it may amount to.

3 In the next place comes in the consideration, that all honest and good men are disposed to befriend honest good men as such, and to discountenance the vicious as such, and do so in some degree; indeed in a considerable degree, from which favour and discouragement cannot but arise considerable advantage and inconvenience. And though the generality of the world have little regard to the morality of their own actions, and may be supposed to have less to that of others, when they themselves are not concerned; yet let any one be known to be a man of virtue, somehow or other he will be favoured, and good offices will be done him, from regard to his character, without remote views, occasionally, and in some low degree, I think, by the generality of the world, as it happens to come in their way. Public honours too and advantages are the natural consequences, are sometimes at least the consequences in fact, of virtuous actions; of eminent justice, fidelity, charity, love to our country, considered in the view of being virtuous. And sometimes even death itself, often infamy and external inconveniences, are the public consequences of vice as vice. For instance, the sense which mankind have of tyranny, injustice, oppression, additional to the mere feeling or fear of misery, has doubtless been instrumental in bringing about revolutions, which make a figure even in the history of the world. For it is plain men resent injuries as implying faultiness, and retaliate, not merely under the notion of having received harm, but of having received wrong; and they have this resentment in behalf of others as well as of themselves. So likewise even the generality are, in some degree, grateful and disposed to return good offices, not merely because such an one has been the occasion of good to them, but under the view that such good offices implied kind intention and good desert in the doer. To all this may be added two or three particular things, which many persons will think frivolous; but to me

nothing appears so, which at all comes in towards determining a question of such importance as whether there be or be not a moral institution of government, in the strictest sense moral, *visibly* established and begun in Nature. The particular things are these: That in domestic government, which is doubtless natural, children and others also are very generally punished for falsehood and injustice and ill-behaviour, as such, and rewarded for the contrary; which are instances where veracity, and justice, and right behaviour as such are naturally enforced by rewards and punishments, whether more or less considerable in degree: That though civil government be supposed to take cognizance of actions in no other view than as prejudicial to society, without respect to the immorality of them; yet as such actions are immoral, so the sense which men have of the immorality of them very greatly contributes, in different ways, to bring offenders to justice: and that entire absence of all crime and guilt in the moral sense, when plainly appearing, will almost of course procure, and circumstances of aggravated guilt prevent, a remission of the penalties annexed to civil crimes, in many cases, though by no means in all.

Upon the whole then, besides the good and bad effects of virtue and vice upon men's own minds, the course of the world does, in some measure, turn upon the approbation and disapprobation of them as such in others. The sense of well and ill-doing, the presages of conscience, the love of good characters and dislike of bad ones, honour, shame, resentment, gratitude; all these, considered in themselves and in their effects, do afford manifest real instances of virtue as such naturally favoured, and of vice as such discountenanced, more or less, in the daily course of human life; in every age, in every relation, in every general circumstance of it. That God has given us a moral nature[10] may most justly be urged as a proof of our being under his moral government: but that he has placed us in a condition which gives this nature, as one may speak, scope to operate, and in which it does unavoidably operate; *i. e.* influence mankind to act, so as thus to favour and reward virtue, and discountenance and punish vice; this is not the same, but a further additional proof of his moral government: for it is an instance

[10] See Dissertation II., [and Sermons.]

of it. The first is a proof, that he will finally favour and support virtue effectually; the second is an example of his favouring and supporting it at present, in some degree.

If a more distinct inquiry be made, whence it arises that virtue as such is often rewarded, and vice as such is punished, and this rule never inverted, it will be found to proceed, in part, immediately from the moral nature itself which God has given us; and also in part from his having given us, together with this nature, so great a power over each other's happiness and misery. For, *first*, it is certain that peace and delight, in some degree and upon some occasions, is the necessary and present effect of virtuous practice; an effect arising immediately from the constitution of our nature. We are so made, that well-doing as such gives us satisfaction, at least in some instances; ill-doing as such in none. And *secondly*, from our moral nature, joined with God's having put our happiness and misery in many respects in each other's power, it cannot but be, that vice as such, some kinds and instances of it at least, will be infamous, and men will be disposed to punish it as in itself detestable; and the villain will by no means be able always to avoid feeling that infamy, any more than he will be able to escape this further punishment which mankind will be disposed to inflict upon him under the notion of his deserving it. But there can be nothing on the side of vice to answer this, because there is nothing in the human mind contradictory, as the logicians speak, to virtue. For virtue consists in a regard to what is right and reasonable, as being so; in a regard to veracity, justice, charity, in themselves: and there is surely no such thing as a like natural regard to falsehood, injustice, cruelty. If it be thought that there are instances of an approbation of vice, as such, in itself, and for its own sake (though it does not appear to me that there is any such thing at all; but supposing there be) it is evidently monstrous; as much so as the most acknowledged perversion of any passion whatever. Such instances of perversion then being left out as merely imaginary, or however unnatural, it must follow, from the frame of our nature, and from our condition in the respects now described, that vice cannot at all be, and virtue cannot but be favoured as such by others, upon some occasions, and happy in itself in some degree. For what is here

insisted upon is not the degree in which virtue and vice are thus distinguished, but only the thing itself, that they are so in some degree; though the whole good and bad effect of virtue and vice as such is not inconsiderable in degree. But that they must be thus distinguished in some degree is in a manner necessary; it is matter of fact of daily experience, even in the greatest confusion of human affairs.

It is not pretended but that in the natural course of things happiness and misery appear to be distributed by other rules than only the personal merit and demerit of characters. They may sometimes be distributed by way of mere discipline. There may be the wisest and best reasons why the world should be governed by general laws, from whence such promiscuous distribution perhaps must follow; and also why our happiness and misery should be put in each other's power in the degree which they are. And these things, as in general they contribute to the rewarding virtue and punishing vice as such, so they often contribute also, not to the inversion of this, which is impossible; but to the rendering persons prosperous, though wicked; afflicted, though righteous; and, which is worse, to the *rewarding some actions*, though vicious, and *punishing other actions*, though virtuous. But all this cannot drown the voice of Nature in the conduct of providence, plainly declaring itself for virtue, by way of distinction from vice, and preference to it. For our being so constituted as that virtue and vice are thus naturally favoured and discountenanced, rewarded and punished respectively as such, is an intuitive proof of the intent of Nature that it should be so; otherwise the constitution of our mind, from which it thus immediately and directly proceeds, would be absurd. But it cannot be said, because virtuous actions are sometimes punished and vicious actions rewarded, that Nature intended it. For though this great disorder is brought about, as all actions are done, by means of some natural passion, yet *this may be*, as it undoubtedly is, brought about by the perversion of such passion implanted in us for other, and those very good purposes. And indeed these other and good purposes, even of every passion, may be clearly seen.

We have then a declaration, in some degree of present effect, from Him who is supreme in Nature, which side he

is of, or what part he takes: a declaration for virtue and against vice. So far therefore as a man is true to virtue, to veracity and justice, to equity and charity, and the right of the case in whatever he is concerned, so far he is on the side of the Divine administration, and co-operates with it; and from hence, to such a man, arises naturally a secret satisfaction and sense of security, and implicit hope of somewhat further. And,

5 V. This hope is confirmed by the necessary tendencies of virtue, which, though not of present effect, yet are at present discernible in Nature, and so afford an instance of somewhat moral in the essential constitution of it. There is, in the nature of things, a tendency in virtue and vice to produce the good and bad effects now mentioned in a greater degree than they do in fact produce them. For instance, good and bad men would be much more rewarded and punished as such, were it not that justice is often artificially eluded, that characters are not known, and many who would thus favour virtue and discourage vice are hindered from doing so by accidental causes.[11] These tendencies of virtue and vice are obvious with regard to *individuals*. But it may require more particularly to be considered that power in a *society*, by being under the direction of virtue, naturally increases, and has a necessary tendency to prevail over opposite power not under the direction of it, in like manner as power, by being under the direction of reason, increases, and has a tendency to prevail over brute force. There are several brute creatures of equal, and several of superior strength to that of men; and possibly the sum of the whole strength of brutes may be greater than that of mankind; but reason gives us the advantage

[11] [The adverse phenomena with which Butler has to deal in this chapter are admirably explained. The indulgence of passion brings pleasure; but, says Butler, the pleasure is in the indulgence, not in the vice. Virtuous acts, again, are sometimes punished, not, however, it is replied, *because* virtuous, but *though* virtuous. The tendencies of virtue, it is objected, are checked by hindrances. It is so, but the checks are accidental and temporary, the tendencies essential and eternal. Perhaps the reasoning of this chapter approaches as near to positive demonstration as the nature of the argument will admit.]

and superiority over them, and thus man is the acknowledged governing animal upon the earth. Nor is this superiority considered by any as accidental; but as what reason has a tendency, in the nature of the thing, to obtain. And yet perhaps difficulties may be raised about the meaning, as well as the truth of the assertion, that virtue has the like tendency.

To obviate these difficulties, let us see more distinctly how the case stands with regard to reason, which is so readily acknowledged to have this advantageous tendency. Suppose then two or three men, of the best and most improved understanding, in a desolate open plain, attacked by ten times the number of beasts of prey: would their reason secure them the victory in this unequal combat? Power then, though joined with reason, and under its direction, cannot be expected to prevail over opposite power, though merely brutal, unless the one bears some proportion to the other. Again, put the imaginary case that rational and irrational creatures were of like external shape and manner: it is certain, before there were opportunities for the first to distinguish each other, to separate from their adversaries, and to form a union among themselves, they might be upon a level, or in several respects upon great disadvantage, though united they might be vastly superior; since union is of such efficacy, that ten men united might be able to accomplish what ten thousand of the same natural strength and understanding wholly ununited could not. In this case then, brute force might more than maintain its ground against reason, for want of union among the rational creatures. Or suppose a number of men to land upon an island inhabited only by wild beasts; a number of men who, by the regulations of civil government, the inventions of art, and the experience of some years, could they be preserved so long, would be really sufficient to subdue the wild beasts and to preserve themselves in security from them: yet a conjuncture of accidents might give such advantage to the irrational animals, as that they might at once overpower, and even extirpate the whole species of rational ones. Length of time then, proper scope and opportunities for reason to exert itself, may be absolutely necessary to its prevailing over brute force. Further still, there are

many instances of brutes succeeding in attempts which they could not have undertaken, had not their irrational nature rendered them incapable of foreseeing the danger of such attempts, or the fury of passion hindered their attending to it; and there are instances of reason and real prudence preventing men's undertaking what, it hath appeared afterwards, they might have succeeded in by a lucky rashness. And in certain conjunctures, ignorance and folly, weakness and discord, may have their advantages. So that rational animals have not necessarily the superiority over irrational ones; but, how improbable soever it may be, it is evidently possible that in some globes the latter may be superior. And were the former wholly at variance and disunited by false self-interest and envy, by treachery and injustice, and consequent rage and malice against each other, whilst the latter were firmly united among themselves by instinct, this might greatly contribute to the introducing such an inverted order of things. For every one would consider it as inverted, since reason has, in the nature of it, a tendency to prevail over brute force, notwithstanding the possibility it may not prevail, and the necessity which there is of many concurring circumstances to render it prevalent.

Now I say, virtue in a society has a like tendency to procure superiority and additional power, whether this power be considered as the means of security from opposite power, or of obtaining other advantages. And it has this tendency, by rendering public good an object and end to every member of the society, by putting every one upon consideration and diligence, recollection and self-government, both in order to see what is the most effectual method, and also in order to perform their proper part for obtaining and preserving it; by uniting a society within itself, and so increasing its strength; and, which is particularly to be mentioned, uniting it by means of veracity and justice. For as these last are principal bonds of union, so benevolence or public spirit, undirected, unrestrained by them, is nobody knows what.

And suppose the invisible world, and the invisible dispensations of Providence, to be, in any sort, analogous to what appears: or that both together make up one uniform scheme, the two parts of which, the part which we see and that

which is beyond our observation, are analogous to each other: then there must be a like natural tendency in the derived power, throughout the universe, under the direction of virtue, to prevail in general over that which is not under its direction, as there is in reason, derived reason in the universe, to prevail over brute force. But then, in order to the prevalence of virtue, or that it may actually produce what it has a tendency to produce, the like concurrences are necessary as are to the prevalence of reason. There must be some proportion between the natural power or force which is and that which is not under the direction of virtue: there must be sufficient length of time; for the complete success of virtue, as of reason, cannot, from the nature of the thing, be otherwise than gradual; there must be, as one may speak, a fair field of trial, a stage large and extensive enough, proper occasions and opportunities, for the virtuous to join together to exert themselves against lawless force, and to reap the fruit of their united labours. Now indeed it is to be hoped, that the disproportion between the good and bad, even here on earth, is not so great but that the former have natural power sufficient to their prevailing to a considerable degree, if circumstances would permit this power to be united. For much less, very much less, power under the direction of virtue would prevail over much greater not under the direction of it. However, good men over the face of the earth cannot unite; as for other reasons, so because they cannot be sufficiently ascertained of each other's characters. And the known course of human things, the scene we are now passing through, particularly the shortness of life, denies to virtue its full scope in several other respects. The natural tendency which we have been considering, though real, is *hindered* Obj from being carried into effect in the present state; but these hindrances may be removed in a future one. Virtue, to borrow the Christian allusion, is militant here, and various untoward accidents contribute to its being often overborne: but it may combat with greater advantage hereafter, and prevail completely, and enjoy its consequent rewards in some future states. Neglected as it is, perhaps unknown, perhaps despised and oppressed here; there may be scenes in eternity lasting enough, and in every other way adapted to

afford it a sufficient sphere of action, and a sufficient sphere for the natural consequences of it to follow in fact. If the soul be naturally immortal, and this state be a progress towards a future one, as childhood is towards mature age, good men may naturally unite, not only amongst themselves, but also with other orders of virtuous creatures in that future state. For virtue, from the very nature of it, is a principle and bond of union, in some degree, amongst all who are endued with it, and known to each other; so as that by it a good man cannot but recommend himself to the favour and protection of all virtuous beings throughout the whole universe who can be acquainted with his character, and can any way interpose in his behalf in any part of his duration. And one might add, that suppose all this advantageous tendency of virtue to become effect, amongst one or more orders of creatures, in any distant scenes and periods, and to be seen by any orders of vicious creatures throughout the universal kingdom of God; this happy effect of virtue would have a tendency by way of example, and possibly in other ways, to amend those of them who are capable of amendment, and being recovered to a just sense of virtue. If our notions of the plan of Providence were enlarged in any sort proportionable to what late discoveries have enlarged our views with respect to the material world, representations of this kind would not appear absurd or extravagant. However, they are not to be taken as intended for a literal delineation of what is in fact the particular scheme of the universe, which cannot be known without revelation; for suppositions are not to be looked on as true because not incredible, but they are mentioned to show that our finding virtue to be hindered from procuring to itself such superiority and advantages is no objection against its having, in the essential nature of the thing, a tendency to procure them. And the suppositions now mentioned do plainly show this; for they show that these hindrances are so far from being necessary, that we ourselves can easily conceive how they may be removed in future states, and full scope be granted to virtue. And all these advantageous tendencies of it are to be considered as declarations of God in its favour. This however is taking a pretty large compass; though it is certain that, as the material world appears to be, in a man-

ner, boundless and immense, there must be *some* scheme of providence vast in proportion to it.

But let us return to the earth our habitation, and we shall 2
see this happy tendency of virtue, by imagining an instance not so vast and remote; by supposing a kingdom or society of men upon it, perfectly virtuous, for a succession of many ages, to which, if you please, may be given a situation advantageous for universal monarchy. In such a state there (a)
would be no such thing as faction; but men of the greatest capacity would, of course, all along have the chief direction of affairs willingly yielded to them, and they would share it among themselves without envy. Each of these would have the part assigned him, to which his genius was peculiarly adapted; and others, who had not any distinguished genius, would be safe, and think themselves very happy by being under the protection and guidance of those who had. Public determinations would really be the result of the united wisdom of the community; and they would faithfully be executed by the united strength of it. Some would, in a higher way contribute, but all would in some way contribute, to the public prosperity; and in it each would enjoy the fruits of his own virtue. And as injustice, whether by fraud or force, would be unknown among themselves, so they would be sufficiently secured from it in their neighbours. For cunning and false self-interest, confederacies in injustice, ever slight, and accompanied with faction and intestine treachery; these on one hand would be found mere childish folly and weakness, when set in opposition against wisdom, public spirit, union inviolable, and fidelity on the other; allowing both a sufficient length of years to try their force. Add the general influence which such a kingdom would have over the face of the earth, by way of example particularly, and the reverence which would be (b)
paid it. It would plainly be superior to all others, and the world must gradually come under its empire: not by means of lawless violence, but partly by what must be allowed to be just conquest, and partly by other kingdoms submitting themselves voluntarily to it, throughout a course of ages, and claiming its protection, one after another, in successive exigencies. The head of it would be an universal monarch, in another sense than any mortal has yet been; and the

eastern style would be literally applicable to him, that *all people, nations, and languages should serve him*. And though indeed our knowledge of human nature, and the whole history of mankind, show the impossibility, without some miraculous interposition, that a number of men, here on earth, should unite in one society or government in the fear of God and universal practice of virtue, and that such a government should continue so united for a succession of ages; yet admitting or supposing this, the effect would be as now drawn out. And thus, for instance, the wonderful power and prosperity promised to the Jewish nation in the Scripture would be, in a great measure, the consequence of what is predicted of them, that the *people should be all righteous, and inherit the land for ever*;[12] were we to understand the latter phrase of a long continuance only, sufficient to give things time to work. The predictions of this kind, for there are many of them, cannot come to pass in the present known course of Nature; but suppose them come to pass, and then the dominion and pre-eminence promised must naturally follow to a very considerable degree.

Consider now the general system of religion; that the government of the world is uniform, and one, and moral; that virtue and right shall finally have the advantage, and prevail over fraud and lawless force, over the deceits as well as the violence of wickedness, under the conduct of one supreme governor; and from the observations above made, it will appear that God has, by our reason, given us to see a peculiar connexion in the several parts of this scheme, and a tendency towards the completion of it, arising out of the very nature of virtue; which tendency is to be considered as somewhat moral in the essential constitution of things. If any one should think all this to be of little importance, I desire him to consider what he would think, if vice had essentially and in its nature these advantageous tendencies, or if virtue had essentially the direct contrary ones.

But it may be objected, that notwithstanding all these

[12] [Isa. lx. 21. The reasoning is not weakened if it be held that the words of this passage apply not to the Jews strictly, but to the Israel of God, the church of Christ.]

natural effects and these natural tendencies of virtue, yet things may be now going on throughout the universe, and may go on hereafter in the same mixed way as here at present upon earth: virtue sometimes prosperous, sometimes depressed; vice sometimes punished, sometimes successful.[18] The answer to which is, that it is not the purpose of this chapter, nor of this treatise, properly to prove God's perfect moral government over the world, or the truth of religion; but to observe what there is in the constitution and course of Nature, to confirm the proper proof of it, supposed to be known; and that the weight of the foregoing observations to this purpose may be thus distinctly proved. Pleasure and pain are, indeed, to a certain degree, say to a very high degree, distributed amongst us without any apparent regard to the merit or demerit of characters. And were there nothing else concerning this matter discernible in the constitution and course of Nature, there would be no ground from the constitution and course of Nature to hope or to fear that men would be rewarded or punished hereafter according to their deserts; which, however, it is to be remarked, implies that even then there would be no ground from appearances to think, that vice upon the whole would have the advantage, rather than that virtue would. And thus the proof of a future state of retribution would rest upon the usual known arguments for it, which are, I think, plainly unanswerable; and would be so, though there were no additional confirmation of them from the things above insisted on. But these things are a very strong confirmation of them. For,

First, They show that the Author of Nature is not indifferent to virtue and vice. They amount to a declaration from him, determinate and not to be evaded, in favour of one, and against the other; such a declaration, as there is nothing to be set over against or answer on the part of vice. So that were a man laying aside the proper proof of religion, to determine from the course of Nature only, whether it were most probable that the righteous or the wicked would have the advantage in a future life, there can be no doubt but that he would determine the probability to be

[18] [From Hume; though the objection is common enough.]

that the former would. The course of Nature then, in the view of it now given, furnishes us with a real practical proof of the obligations of religion.

2 Secondly, When, conformably to what religion teaches us, God shall reward and punish virtue and vice as such, so as that every one shall, upon the whole, have his deserts; this distributive justice will not be a thing different in *kind*, but only in *degree*, from what we experience in his present government. It will be that in *effect* towards which we now see a *tendency*. It will be no more than the *completion* of that moral government, the *principles and beginning* of which have been shown, beyond all dispute, discernible in the present constitution and course of Nature. And from hence it follows:

3 Thirdly, That, as under the natural government of God, our experience of those kinds and degrees of happiness and misery, which we do experience at present, gives just ground to hope for and to fear higher degrees and other kinds of both in a future state, supposing a future state admitted; so under his moral government our experience, that virtue and vice are, in the manners above mentioned, actually rewarded and punished at present, in a certain degree, gives just ground to hope and to fear that they *may be* rewarded and punished in a higher degree hereafter. It is acknowledged indeed that this alone is not sufficient ground to think that they *actually will be* rewarded and punished in a higher degree, rather than in a lower; but then,

4 Lastly, There is sufficient ground to think so, from the good and bad tendencies of virtue and vice. For these tendencies are essential, and founded in the nature of things; whereas the hindrances to their becoming effect are, in numberless cases, not necessary, but artificial only. Now it may be much more strongly argued that these tendencies, as well as the actual rewards and punishments of virtue and vice, which arise directly out of the nature of things, will remain hereafter, than that the accidental hindrances of them will. And if these hindrances do not remain, those rewards and punishments cannot but be carried on much farther towards the perfection of moral government; *i. e.* the tendencies of virtue and vice will become effect; but

when or where, or in what particular way, cannot be known at all but by revelation.

Upon the whole, there is a kind of moral government implied in God's natural government;[14] virtue and vice are naturally rewarded and punished as beneficial and mischievous to society,[15] and rewarded and punished directly as virtue and vice.[16] The notion then of a moral scheme of government is not fictitious but natural, for it is suggested to our thoughts by the constitution and course of Nature; and the execution of this scheme is actually begun, in the instances here mentioned. And these things are to be considered as a declaration of the Author of Nature for virtue and against vice; they give a credibility to the supposition of their being rewarded and punished hereafter, and also ground to hope and to fear that they may be rewarded and punished in higher degrees than they are here. And as all this is confirmed, so the argument for religion, from the constitution and course of Nature, is carried on farther, by observing that there are natural tendencies, and, in innumerable cases, only artificial hindrances to this moral scheme's being carried on much farther towards perfection than it is at present.[17] The notion then of a moral scheme of government, much more perfect than what is seen, is not a fictitious but a natural notion, for it is suggested to our thoughts by the essential tendencies of virtue and vice. And these tendencies are to be considered as intimations, as implicit promises and threatenings, from the Author of Nature, of much greater rewards and punishments to follow virtue and vice than do at present. And, indeed, every *natural* tendency which is to continue, but which is hindered from becoming effect by only *accidental* causes, affords a presumption that such tendency will, some time or other, become effect; a presumption in degree proportionable to the length of the duration, through which such tendency will continue. And from these things together arises a real presumption, that the moral scheme of government established in Nature, shall be carried on much farther towards perfection hereafter; and, I think, a presumption that it will be absolutely completed. But from these things, joined

[14] P. 56. [15] P. 57. [16] P. 58, etc. [17] P. 64, etc.

with the moral nature which God has given us, considered as given us by him, arises a practical proof[18] that it will be completed; a proof from fact; and therefore a distinct one from that which is deduced from the eternal and unalterable relations, the fitness and unfitness of actions.

CHAPTER IV.

OF A STATE OF PROBATION, AS IMPLYING TRIAL, DIFFICULTIES, AND DANGER.[1]

[Commonly probation has the same meaning as moral government. It is here used, however, to indicate the difficulties and risks consequent upon temptation. In this light it deserves special consideration.

A That *religious* probation implies danger and risk (trial) in regard to the future is not improbable, from the analogy of our *present natural* probation, which makes interest depend upon behaviour. The two are analogous in many particulars.

1 In *fact* our interests in both respects are in danger from ourselves, as is clear from the following:

a God has made our happiness to depend on our own acts, b, We blame ourselves for misconduct in temporal affairs. c, We actually miss happiness and incur misery through our own acts. d, The acknowledged hazards of the young, and the temptations to vices which are yet mischievous.

2 The occasions or causes of our natural and religious probations are analogous. These causes are in our nature or in our circumstances.

a Circumstances or temptations often betray men: so do their passions; the two mutually implying each other.

[18] See this proof drawn out briefly, ch. vi. [The views of chapter vi. form the basis of an admirable book by the late J. J. Gurney, on "Habit and Discipline."]

[1] ["One of the most successful chapters in the volume."—*Chalmers.* The difficulties and risks of a religious course, the aggravation of those risks by the acts of others, are all shown to correspond with what is experienced in common life, so that if we give up on these grounds the "God of religion," we must also give up the "God of Nature."]

b So close is the analogy, that in both cases the same passions are excited by the same means; so that we may describe both by similar terms.

3 The effects of these temptations on men's behaviour are analogous.

a Some gratify themselves without looking at the future.

b Some are *deceived* by passion.

c Some are *forced* away by it against their judgment.

d Some *shamelessly avow* their preference for vice in spite of consequences; and

e At the very least, men do voluntarily go wrong in both cases.

4 The way in which these difficulties and dangers are increased, and in some sense made, is alike in both cases.

a *Others* give us a bad education, set a bad example, encourage dishonest practices, corrupt religion, and diffuse false notions of happiness.

b *We ourselves* increase our difficulties, by negligence, by indulgence which weakens our moral powers; by accumulated irregularities, which make the course of virtue perplexed and disadvantageous.

B It is indeed objected that this state is improbable in two respects.

1 Our condition thus appears to be unfavourable to our interests. Answer:

a Still it is not to be complained of, for with care our difficulties may be met; and, as to God, it is equitable that he should put upon us what it is clear we can do, nor can we complain unless, etc.

b Our very condition in nature makes a similar condition in religion probable, from the analogy between the two.

2 This condition involves hazards, and may work ruin, and must be foreseen to work it: Such an arrangement is improbable.

No doubt, a, Such hazard is a mystery, which, however, the *whole* case may enable us to explain; b, At all events, the constitution of Nature is in favour of such hazard; and, c, As for the certainty of the ruin, it is as much contingent as our conduct is.

C The conclusion: in both capacities our interest is offered, not to our *acceptance*, but to our *acquisition*; *we are in danger* of missing it; and, without attention and self-denial, it *must be* missed.]

THE general doctrine of religion, that our present life is a state of probation for a future one, comprehends under is

several particular things distinct from each other. But the first and most common meaning of it seems to be, that our future interest is now depending, and depending upon ourselves; that we have scope and opportunities here for that good and bad behaviour, which God will reward and punish hereafter; together with temptations to one, as well as inducements of reason to the other. And this is, in great measure, the same with saying, that we are under the moral government of God, and to give an account of our actions to him. For the notion of a future account and general righteous judgment implies some sort of temptations to what is wrong; otherwise there would be no moral possibility of doing wrong, nor ground for judgment or discrimination. But there is this difference, that the word *probation* is more distinctly and particularly expressive of allurements to wrong, or difficulties in adhering uniformly to what is right, and of the danger of miscarrying by such temptations, than the words *moral government.* A state of probation then, as thus particularly implying in it trial, difficulties and danger, may require to be considered distinctly by itself.

a And as the moral government of God, which religion teaches us, implies that we are in a state of trial with regard
1 to a future world; so also his natural government over us implies that we are in a state of trial, in the like sense, with regard to the present world. Natural government by rewards and punishments as much implies natural trial as moral government does moral trial. The natural government of God here meant[2] consists in his annexing pleasure to some actions and pain to others, which are in our power to do or forbear, and in giving us notice of such appoint-
a ment beforehand. This necessarily implies that he has made our happiness and misery or our interest to depend in part upon ourselves: and so far as men have temptations to any course of action which will probably occasion them greater temporal inconvenience and uneasiness than satisfaction, so far their temporal interest is in danger from themselves, or they are in a state of trial with respect to it.
b Now people often blame others and even themselves for

[2] Chap. ii.

their misconduct in their temporal concerns; and we find many are greatly wanting to themselves, and miss of that natural happiness, which they might have obtained in the present life; perhaps every one does in some degree. But many run themselves into great inconvenience, and into extreme distress and misery; not through incapacity of knowing better, and doing better for themselves, which would be nothing to the present purpose, but through their own fault. And these things necessarily imply temptation and danger of miscarrying in a greater or less degree, with respect to our worldly interest or happiness. Every one too, without having religion in his thoughts, speaks of the hazards which young people run upon their setting out in the world; hazards from other causes than merely their ignorance, and unavoidable accidents. And some course of vice at least, being contrary to men's worldly interest or good; temptations to these must at the same time be temptations to forego our present and our future interest. Thus in our natural or temporal capacity, we are in a state (1
of trial, *i. e.* of difficulty and danger, analogous, or like to our moral and religious trial.

This will more distinctly appear to any one who thinks it worth while, more distinctly to consider, what it is which constitutes our trial in both capacities, and to observe, how mankind behave under it.

And that which constitutes this our trial in both these 2
capacities, must be somewhat either in our external circumstances, or in our nature. For, on the one hand, persons may be betrayed into wrong behaviour upon surprise, or overcome upon any other very singular and extraordinary external occasions, who would otherwise have preserved their character of prudence and of virtue; in which cases every one in speaking of the wrong behaviour of these persons would impute it to such particular external circumstances. And on the other hand, men who have contracted habits of vice and folly of any kind, or have some particular passion in excess, will seek opportunities, and, as it were, go out of their way to gratify themselves in these respects, at the expense of their wisdom and their virtue; led to it, as every one would say, not by external temptations, but by such habits and passions. And the account of this last

case is, that particular passions are no more coincident with prudence or that reasonable self-love, the end of which is our worldly interest, than we are with the principle of virtue and religion; but often draw contrary ways to one as well as to the other; and so such particular passions are as much temptations to act imprudently with regard to our worldly interest, as to act viciously.[a] However, as when we say, men are misled by external circumstances of temptation, it cannot but be understood that there is somewhat within themselves to render those circumstances temptations, or to render them susceptible of impressions from them; so when we say they are misled by passions, it is always supposed that there are occasions, circumstances, and objects, exciting these passions, and affording means for gratifying them. And therefore, temptations from within and from without, coincide and mutually imply each other. Now the several external objects of the appetites, passions, and affections, being present to the senses, or offering themselves to the mind, and so exciting emotions suitable to their nature; not only in cases where they can be gratified consistently with innocence and prudence, but also in cases where they cannot, and yet can be gratified imprudently and viciously; this as really puts them in danger of voluntarily foregoing their present interest or good, as their future; and as really renders self-denial necessary to secure one as the other; *i. e.* we are in a like state of trial with respect to both, by the very same passions,
5 excited by the very same means. Thus mankind having a temporal interest depending upon themselves, and a prudent course of behaviour being necessary to secure it; passions inordinately excited, whether by means of example or by any other external circumstance, towards such objects, at such times or in such degrees, as that they cannot be gratified consistently with worldly prudence; are temptations, dangerous and too often successful temptations, to forego a greater temporal good for a less; *i. e.* to forego what is, upon the whole, our temporal interest, for the sake of a present gratification. This is a description of our state of trial in our temporal capacity. Substitute now the word

[a] See Sermons preached at the Rolls, 1726, second edition, p. 205, etc., preface, p. 25, etc., Sermon, p. 21.

future for *temporal*, and *virtue* for *prudence*; and it will be just as proper a description of our state of trial in our religious capacity; so analogous they are to each other.

If from consideration of this our like state of trial in both a
capacities, we go on to observe further, how mankind behave under it; we shall find there are some who have so little sense of it that they scarce look beyond the passing
day; they are so taken up with present gratifications as to a
have, in a manner, no feeling of consequences, no regard to their future ease or fortune in this life, any more than to
their happiness in another. Some appear to be blinded and b
deceived by inordinate passion in their worldly concerns as much as in religion. Others are not deceived, but, as it were, forcibly carried away by the like passions, against
their better judgment and feeble resolutions too of acting c
better. And there are men, and truly they are not a few, who shamelessly avow, not their interest, but their mere
will and pleasure, to be their law of life; and who, in open d
defiance of everything that is reasonable, will go on in a course of vicious extravagance, foreseeing, with no remorse and little fear, that it will be their temporal ruin; and some of them under the apprehension of the consequences of wickedness in another state. And to speak in the most
moderate way, human creatures are not only continually e
liable to go wrong voluntarily, but we see likewise that they often actually do so, with respect to their temporal interests as well as with respect to religion.

Thus our difficulties and dangers, or our trials, in our (2)
temporal and our religious capacity, as they proceed from
the same causes, and have the same effect upon men's (3)
behaviour, are evidently analogous, and of the same kind.

It may be added, that as the difficulties and dangers of 4
miscarrying in our religious state of trial, are greatly increased, and one is ready to think, in a manner wholly *made*
by the ill behaviour of others; by a wrong education, wrong a
in a moral sense, sometimes positively vicious; by general bad example, by the dishonest artifices which are got into business of all kinds; and in very many parts of the world, by religion's being corrupted into superstitions, which indulge men in their vices; so in like manner, the difficulties of conducting ourselves prudently in respect to our present

interest, and our danger of being led aside from pursuing it, are greatly increased by a foolish education; and after we come to mature age, by the extravagance and carelessness of others, whom we have intercourse with, and by mistaken notions, very generally prevalent, and taken up from common opinion, concerning temporal happiness, and
b wherein it consists. And persons by their own negligence and folly in their temporal affairs, no less than by a course of vice, bring themselves into new difficulties; and by habits of indulgence, become less qualified to go through them; and one irregularity after another, embarrasses things to such a degree, that they know not whereabout they are, and often makes the path of conduct so intricate and perplexed, that it is difficult to trace it out, difficult even to determine what is the prudent or the moral part. Thus, for instance, wrong behaviour in one stage of life, youth; wrong, I mean, considering ourselves only in our temporal capacity, without taking in religion; this in several ways increases the difficulties of right behaviour in mature age, *i. e.* puts us into a more disadvantageous state of trial in our
8 temporal capacity.

Obj. We are an inferior part of the creation of God. There are natural appearances of our being in a state of degradation.[4] And we certainly are in a condition, which *does not*
1 *seem* by any means the most advantageous we could imagine or desire, either in our natural or moral capacity, for securing either our present or future interest. However, this condition low and careful and uncertain as it is, does not
2 afford any just ground of complaint. For, as men may manage their temporal affairs with prudence, and so pass their days here on earth in tolerable ease and satisfaction, by a moderate degree of care; so likewise with regard to religion, there is no more required than what they are well able to do,[5] and what they must be greatly wanting to them-

[4] Part ii. chap. v.

[5] On the sentiment here expressed see note ([11]) to chap. v.

[An objection is sometimes taken to the reasonings of this chapter and of the volume—to the effect, that religion and its interests are so much more important than those of common life that we cannot compare them or apply God's dealings in the one case to explain his dealings in the other. . . . Butler has answered this objection

selves if they neglect. And for persons to have that put upon them which they are well able to go through, and no more, we naturally consider as an equitable thing, supposing it done by proper authority. Nor have we any more reason to complain of it with regard to the Author of Nature, than of his not having given us other advantages, belonging to other orders of creatures.

But the thing here insisted upon is that the state of trial which religion teaches us we are in, is rendered credible by its being throughout uniform and of a piece with the general conduct of Providence towards us, in all other respects within the compass of our knowledge. Indeed if mankind, considered in their natural capacity, as inhabitants of this world only, found themselves, from their birth to their death, in a settled state of security and happiness, without any solicitude or thought of their *own*; or if they were in no danger of being brought into inconveniences and distress, by carelessness or the folly of passion, through bad example, the treachery of others, or the deceitful appearances of things; were this our natural condition, then it might seem strange, and be some presumption against the truth of religion, that it represents our future and more general interest, as not secure of course, but as depending upon our behaviour, and requiring recollection and self-government to obtain it. For it might be alleged, "What you say is our condition in one respect, is not in any wise of a sort with what we find, by experience, our condition is in another. Our whole present interest is secured to our hands without any solicitude of ours; and

in different passages (see chap. v. B 2). There is, however, an answer of another kind. If the objection is to the *likelihood* of such arrangements in religion, then the frequency of similar arrangements in common life, even where important interests are at stake, is a fair reply. If the objection is to the *justice* of such arrangements, then the existence of similar arrangements in common life is a *decisive* reply. If it is said to be *unjust* to offer eternal life to our acquisition rather than to our acceptance, and then to make the acquisition a matter of self-denial and difficulty, it is also *unjust* to make the commonest blessings similarly dependent upon ourselves. If there is no injustice in the one arrangement, where the interests are temporal, neither is there in the other, though the interests are eternal.]

why should not our future interest, if we have any such, be so too?" But since, on the contrary, thought and consideration, the voluntary denying ourselves many things which we desire, and a course of behaviour, far from being always agreeable to us, are absolutely necessary to our acting even a common decent and a common prudent part, so as to pass with any satisfaction through the present world, and be received upon any tolerable good terms in it; since this is the case, all presumption against self-denial and attention being necessary to secure our higher interest,
2 is removed. Had we not experience, it might, perhaps speciously, be urged that it is impossible anything of hazard and danger should be put upon us by an Infinite Being; when everything which is hazard and danger in our manner of conception, and will end in error, confusion, and misery, is now already certain in his foreknowledge. And
a indeed, why anything of hazard and danger should be put upon such frail creatures as we are, may well be thought a difficulty in speculation; and cannot but be so, till we
b know the whole, or, however, much more of the case. But still the constitution of Nature is as it is. Our happiness and misery are trusted to our conduct, and made to depend upon it. Somewhat, and in many circumstances a great deal too, is put upon us either to do or to suffer as we choose. And all the various miseries of life, which people bring upon themselves by negligence and folly, and might have avoided by proper care, are instances of this; which
c miseries are beforehand just as contingent and undetermined as their conduct, and left to be determined by it.

C These observations are an answer to the objections against the credibility of a state of trial, as implying temptations, and real danger of miscarrying with regard to our general interest, under the moral government of God; and they show, that if we are at all to be considered in such a capacity, and as having such an interest; the general analogy of Providence must lead us to apprehend ourselves in danger of miscarrying, in different degrees, as to this interest, by our neglecting to act the proper part belonging to us in that capacity. For we have a present interest, under the government of God, which we experience here upon earth. And this interest, as it is not forced upon us, so neither is it

offered to our acceptance, but to our acquisition; in such sort, as that we are in danger of missing it, by means of temptations to neglect, or act contrary to it; and without attention and self-denial, must and do miss of it. It is then perfectly credible that this may be our case, with respect to that chief and final good which religion proposes to us.

CHAPTER V.

ON A STATE OF PROBATION, AS INTENDED FOR MORAL DISCIPLINE AND IMPROVEMENT.

[INTRODUCTION.—Why should there be the risk indicated in the last chapter? is a question attended with insuperable difficulties. a, All vice, indeed, and many miseries, have some good effects; yet the reason for the existence of vice and misery we cannot give, and perhaps, b, it is beyond our faculties to understand it, or it may be better for us not to know it. Yet, c, the existence of these conduces to our fitness for another life. Though this be a *partial* reason only, it shows at least what our present business is—improvement in holiness.

A The present trial, preparing us for a future life, is analogous to the education men now undergo in one state of life preparing them for another. This analogy will appear from some considerations common to both probations (**1, 2**); and from a distinct consideration of each, the natural (**3**) and the religious (**4**).

- **1** All creatures have capacities, etc., for a particular way of life. Happiness depends now upon the agreement between their capacities and their condition. So it must be in the future.
- **2** The constitution of creatures is such that they may become qualified for states of life for which they were once unqualified, in which observe,
  - a Men experience increased facility of action, a settled alteration of character, an improvement by exercise of their intellectual faculties. The first two are habit, as perhaps is the third.
  - b Habits are, according to *their* nature, either *perceptive* or passive and *active*; or, according to man's nature, *bodily* and *mental*; which last are either intellectual or moral.
    - 1 Our habits are formed by repeated acts, which acts, in the case of moral habits, are either the carrying out of prac-

tical principles, and resolutions, or attempts to induce others to act.

2 Passive impressions, it must be noticed, are weakened by repetition, and will not of themselves form habits.

3 From the two previous remarks it follows that, with repetition, the motives and excitements to act become feebler, as passive impressions, but stronger, as active principles. Three examples, (a), (b), (c).

4 Hence habits are not strengthened by admonitions or passive impressions, but by appropriate action.

5 Of much connected with them we may be ignorant, and whether they can be formed in any other way, etc. The facts, however, are clear, and are such as the foregoing.

6 With repeated acts, the facility and the pleasure increase, etc., till a new character is gained.

3 Looking more closely at our *present natural* probation only (one state of life preparing us for another), we note,

a Men start in life unfurnished; *needing* acquired qualifications of knowledge and experience to fit them for after life.

1 If man were born with matured faculties, yet without training, he would be distracted how to use them; and, probably, 2, So self-willed as to be unfit to learn.

b This need Nature supplies, by placing us in the outset in a condition *for acquiring* the necessary discipline and improvement.

1 Children learn gradually the objects and facts around them; are placed under domestic government, where they are taught self-control and obedience, and afterwards by experience they acquire caution and acquaintance with rules of conduct innumerable. 2, This learning, however, depends much upon themselves; though part is communicated by others. 3, Upon their behaviour and use of this discipline their character and station depend.

c To all this our religious probation is analogous, so that

Even if the manner of that religious probation is not quite discernible, this is no objection. For we see not the manner of our present probation, though we see its results (sleep, food, restraint).

4 Looking more closely at our *present religious probation* only (the present life preparing us for another), note,

a That future life will apparently be moral, social, with scope for virtue, and requiring it, though there is much not revealed.

b Our capability of moral improvement in preparing for that state has already been proved (see above, **2**, b, 1–6).

c Our need of moral improvement will appear from the following considerations.

1 In fact, mankind are wicked, and at best imperfect.

2 From our nature, as finite beings, we are in danger of deviating from right (a) through particular affections, which fix on external objects, are excited by them independently of the moral principle, and our only security is (b) from the moral principle strengthened into habit, as Butler describes. To apply this to a future life supposes that particular affections will exist there. If they do, then this discipline will be required. If they do not, still the discipline will secure increased happiness, if the government of the universe is moral.

3 The conclusion, and a fresh proof is, that a nature originally upright may, through these laws, fail or be improved in virtue.

(a) An upright nature may fail; not through liberty, which can account for nothing, but through particular affections in themselves sinless, the operation of which Butler describes in five particulars.

(b) Or be improved to higher and securer virtue, by following the moral principle, which would be strengthened as the particular affections would be weakened, till at last security would be perfect; though a fall would always be possible, because the affections and the moral principle would never be absolutely coincident.

(c) Hence creatures made perfect may need discipline as a security against falling, and a state fit for discipline may be requisite even for them.

4 If an upright nature needs improvement, much more does one that is fallen.

d The present state is peculiarly fit for such discipline, for

1 It teaches moderation and self-restraint.

2 Shows peculiarly our liability to vice: a different thing from speculative knowledge.

3 It puts us on our guard, exercises self-denial, the moral principle, and forms virtuous habits. Self-denial, indeed, is not necessary to virtue, but it conduces to form *habits* of virtue.

B *Objections*

1 It may be said, this state of discipline overtaxes our powers, and supposes a degree of improvement greater than we are capable of.

2 It is said that, in fact, this life is rather a discipline in vice than in virtue. Answer: a, It is not intended to give all the reasons why men are placed here, but some only. b, And, in fact, this life is a discipline in virtue to all who are willing to make it so. c, The fact that such discipline is wasted with some is only analogous to other facts of waste; of seeds, for example, which yet God created to become fruitful. The things here compared are, indeed, different in value, but the facts are equally unaccountable.

3 It is said, against the whole of this discipline, that it makes moral conduct proceed from fear and self-love, and so is not properly moral discipline at all. To which answer,

a To do God's commands because he gives them is obedience, even though it proceed from fear or hope; and repeated acts of obedience will form the moral habit.

b This distinction between self-love and regard to God's authority may be too finely drawn. Both are coincident, and may coexist as just principles of action. He, moreover, who begins to act from the first, will come ultimately to act morally in the highest sense.

4 The discipline here spoken of includes passive resignation, and this can have no place in heaven, because *there* are no afflictions. Answer,

a Prosperity may beget discontent, as well as affliction.

b And, though resignation is not needed in heaven, the habit may be, for, without such habits, self-love and particular affections may be excited beyond their proper limits. And,

c Submission to God's sovereignty, which is not usurped and precarious, but just and eternal, requires in heaven the same temper as resignation upon earth.

5 But might not all the difficulty and risks of this discipline, have been prevented, if men had been made at once what they were to be? To which answer,

a The law of life is not to save us trouble, but to impose it, and enable us to go through it. What we become seems ever dependent upon what we do.

b Improvement by habit supplies natural deficiency, and creates natural security, as acquirement in natural things meets our bodily needs.

c And everywhere we are to choose improvement at the price of effort, or misery as the result of neglect.

C Probation not only implies risks (ch. iv.) and aids improvement (ch. v.), but it seems also intended for a *third* purpose—manifestation of character.

1 This manifestation may refer only to this life; but it may refer also to the next: God intending to show what men are, in order to make it clearer on what principles he deals with them.

2 Certainly in this life such manifestation is a means of present moral government, and seems essential to it; always improving men, if they act well.]

From the consideration of our being in a probation-state, INTRO
of so much difficulty and hazard, naturally arises the question, how we came to be placed in it? But such a general inquiry as this would be found involved in insuperable difficulties. For though some of these difficulties would be lessened by observing, that all wickedness is voluntary, as is implied in its very notion, and that many of the miseries of life have apparent good effects; yet, when we consider other circumstances belonging to both, and what must be the consequence of the former in a life to come; it cannot
but be acknowledged plain folly and presumption to pretend a
to give an account of the whole reasons of this matter; the whole reasons of our being allotted a condition, out of which so much wickedness and misery, so circumstanced, would in fact arise. Whether it be not beyond our faculties
not only to find out, but even to understand the whole ac- b
count of this; or, though we should be supposed capable of understanding it, yet whether it would be of service or prejudice to us to be informed of it, is impossible to say.[1] But

[1] [The wisdom of these remarks is obvious; but it appears more apparent if contrasted with the speculations prevalent in Butler's age. Bayle had recently revived the ancient objections to all religion, which the very existence of evil was supposed to justify: and had thence denied the Divine existence or perfections (Dict. Manichæan; Paulician; Zoroaster; Marcionite). Leibnitz was now reviving a form of the old Stoic doctrine, teaching that the present world is the best possible, and that evil itself is either a form of good or essential to it. Dr. King, archbishop of Dublin, had taught more cautiously that evil must be consistent with God's character, for it

as our present condition can in no wise be shown inconsistent with the perfect moral government of God; so religion teaches us we were placed in it, that we might qualify our-
c selves by the practice of virtue, for another state which is to follow it. And this, though but a partial answer, a very partial one indeed, to the inquiry now mentioned; yet is a more satisfactory answer to another which is of real and of the utmost importance to us to have answered; the inquiry, What is our business here? The known end then, why we are placed in a state of so much affliction, hazard, and difficulty, is our improvement in virtue and piety, as the requisite qualification for a future state of security and happiness.

Now the beginning of life, considered as an education for mature age in the present world, appears plainly, at first
A sight, analogous to this our trial for a future one: the former being in our temporal capacity, what the latter is in our religious capacity. But some observations common to both of them, and a more distinct consideration of each, will more distinctly show the extent and force of the analogy between them; and the credibility, which arises from hence, as well as from the nature of the thing, that the present life was intended to be a state of discipline for a future one.

1 I. Every species of creatures is, we see, designed for a particular way of life; to which, the nature, the capacities, temper, and qualifications of each species, are as necessary as their external circumstances. Both come into the notion of such state, or particular way of life, and are constituent parts of it. Change a man's capacities or character to the degree in which it is conceivable they may be changed, and

exists, and that probably it is a necessary effect of free agency. A little later Warburton and Jenyns, Crousaz and Johnson, joined in the discussion, though without throwing much light upon it. Butler agreed herein with Dr. Samuel Clarke (see "XVIII Sermons preached on several Occasions," Serm. xiii.), and sums up his view in the above paragraph: Evil is voluntary, and is overruled for good, yet is its existence a mystery we cannot fathom. Scripture neither introduces it (as Butler elsewhere notes), nor clears it up (as Whately has shown, see King's Sermon on Predestination, App. 2), but leaves it for the disclosures of another day.]

he would be altogether incapable of a human course of life, and human happiness; as incapable as if, his nature continuing unchanged, he were placed in a world where he had no sphere of action, nor any objects to answer his appetites, passions, and affections of any sort. One thing is set over against another, as an ancient writer expresses it.[a] Our nature corresponds to our external condition. Without this correspondence, there would be no possibility of any such thing as human life and human happiness; which life and happiness are, therefore, a *result* from our nature and condition jointly; meaning by human life, not living in the literal sense, but the whole complex notion commonly understood by those words. So that without determining what will be the employment and happiness, the particular life of good men hereafter, there must be some determinate capacities, some necessary character and qualifications, without which persons cannot but be utterly incapable of it: in like manner, as there must be some, without which men would be incapable of their present state of life. Now,

II. The constitution of human creatures, indeed all creatures which come under our notice, is such as that they are 2
capable of naturally becoming qualified for states of life, for which they were once wholly unqualified. In imagination we may indeed conceive of creatures, as incapable of having any of their faculties naturally enlarged, or as being unable naturally to acquire any new qualifications: but the faculties of every species known to us are made for enlargement; for acquirements of experience and habits. We find ourselves in particular endued with capacities, not only of perceiving ideas, and of knowledge or perceiving truth, but also of storing up our ideas and knowledge by memory. We are capable, not only of acting, and of having different momentary impressions made upon us, but of getting a new facility in any kind of action, and of settled alterations in our temper or character. The power of the last two is the power of habits. But neither the perception of ideas, nor knowledge of any sort are habits, though absolutely necessary to the forming of them. However, apprehension, reason, memory, which are the capacities of acquired know-

[a] [Ecclesus. xlii. 24, 25.]

ledge, are greatly improved by exercise. Whether the word *habit* is applicable to all these improvements, and in particular how far the powers of memory and of habits may be powers of the same nature, I shall not inquire.[3] But that perceptions come into our minds readily and of course, by means of their having been there before, seems a thing of the same sort, as readiness in any particular kind of action, proceeding from being accustomed to it. And aptness to recollect practical observations of service in our conduct, is plainly habit in many cases. There are habits of perception, and habits of action. An instance of the former is our constant and even involuntary readiness in correcting the impressions of our sight, concerning magnitudes and distances, so as to substitute judgment in the room of sensation imperceptibly to ourselves. And it seems as if all other associations of ideas not naturally connected might be called *passive habits*; as properly as our readiness in understanding languages upon sight, or hearing of words. And our readiness in speaking and writing them is an instance of the latter, of active habits. For distinctness we may consider habits as belonging to the body or the mind, and the latter will be explained by the former. Under the former are comprehended all bodily activities or motions, whether graceful or unbecoming, which are owing to use; under the latter, general habits of life and conduct, such as those of obedience and submission to authority, or to any particular person; those of veracity, justice, and charity; those of attention, industry, self-government, envy, revenge. And habits of this latter kind seem produced by repeated acts, as well as the former. And in like manner as habits be-

[3] [*How* it is that actions become easier in consequence of being repeated is a metaphysical question on which authorities are not agreed. Malebranche thinks that the motions of the animal spirits afford the true solution, and even Locke uses language that seems to approve of this view. Hartley and Brown resolve all habits into association; Dr. Reid thinks that the explanation is indiscoverable (Works, p. 551); and Sir W. Hamilton so far concurs as to class habits with acts of the mind which, manifesting their reality in their effects, are themselves out of consciousness. Dr. Chalmers concurs with Brown, modifying, however, parts of his system. Butler wisely keeps to a statement of the facts, which all admit.]

longing to the body are produced by external acts, so habits of the mind are produced by the exertion of inward practical principles, *i. e.*, by carrying them into act, or acting upon them; the principles of obedience, or veracity, justice, and charity. Nor can those habits be formed by any external course of action, otherwise than as it proceeds from these principles; because it is only these inward principles exerted, which are strictly acts of obedience, of veracity, of justice, and of charity. So likewise habits of attention, industry, self-government, are in the same manner acquired by exercise; and habits of envy and revenge by indulgence, whether in outward act, or in thought and intention, *i. e.*, inward act; for such intention is an act. Resolutions also to do well are properly acts. And endeavouring to enforce upon our minds a practical sense of virtue, or to beget in others that practical sense of it which a man really has himself, is a virtuous act. All these, therefore, may and will contribute towards forming good habits. But going over the theory of virtue in one's thoughts, talking well, and drawing fine pictures of it; this is so far from necessarily or certainly conducing to form a habit of it in him who thus employs himself, that it may harden the mind in a contrary course, and render it gradually more insensible, *i. e.*, form a habit of insensibility, to all moral considerations. For, from our very faculty of habits, passive impressions, by being repeated, grow weaker. Thoughts, by often passing through the mind, are felt less sensibly; being accustomed to danger begets intrepidity, *i. e.*, lessens fear; to distress, lessens the passion of pity; to instances of others' mortality, lessens the sensible apprehension of our own. And from these two observations together, that practical habits are formed and strengthened by repeated acts, and that passive impressions grow weaker by being repeated upon us;[4] it must follow that active habits may be gradually forming and strengthening, by a course of acting upon such and such motives and excitements, whilst these

[4] [These views on passive impressions have been adopted and enforced by Dugald Stewart, who avows that he has taken them from Butler. Elements, p. 525. See also Chalmers' Br. Treat., p. 104.]

motives and excitements themselves are, by proportionable degrees, growing less sensible, *i. e.*, are continually less and less sensibly felt, even as the active habits strengthen. And experience confirms this; for active principles, at the very time that they are less lively in perception than they were, are found to be somehow wrought more thoroughly into the temper and character, and become more effectual in influencing our practice. The three things just mentioned
(a) may afford instances of it. Perception of danger is a natural excitement of passive fear and active caution, and by being inured to danger, habits of the latter are gradually wrought at the same time that the former gradually lessens. Perception of distress in others is a natural excitement, passively to pity, and actively to relieve it; but let a man set himself to attend to, inquire out, and relieve distressed
(b) persons, and he cannot but grow less and less sensibly affected with the various miseries of life with which he must become acquainted; when yet, at the same time, benevolence, considered not as a passion, but as a practical principle of action, will strengthen; and whilst he passively compassionates the distressed less, he will acquire a greater
(c) aptitude actively to assist and befriend them. So also at the same time that the daily instances of men's dying around us give us daily a less sensible passive feeling or apprehension of our own mortality, such instances greatly contribute to the strengthening a practical regard to it in serious men; *i. e.*, to forming a habit of acting with a constant view to it. And this seems again further to show that passive impressions made upon our minds by admonition, experience, example, though they may have a remote efficacy, and a very great one, towards forming active habits, yet, can have
4 this efficacy no otherwise than by inducing us to such a course of action; and that it is not being affected so and so, but acting, which forms those habits; only it must be always remembered, that real endeavours to enforce good impressions upon ourselves are a species of virtuous action.
5 Nor do we know how far it is possible in the nature of things, that effects should be wrought in us at once, equivalent to habits, *i. e.*, what is wrought by use and exercise. However, the thing insisted upon is, not what may be possible, but what is in fact the appointment of Nature; which

is, that active habits are to be formed by exercise. Their progress may be so gradual as to be imperceptible in its steps; it may be hard to explain the faculty, by which we are capable of habits, throughout its several parts, and to trace it up to its original, so as to distinguish it from all others in our mind, and it seems as if contrary effects were to be ascribed to it.[5] But the thing in general that our nature is formed to yield, in some such manner as this, to use and exercise, is matter of certain experience.

Thus, by accustoming ourselves to any course of action, we get an aptness to go on, a facility, readiness, and often pleasure, in it. The inclinations which rendered us averse to it grow weaker; the difficulties in it, not only the imaginary but the real ones, lessen; the reasons for it offer themselves of course to our thoughts upon all occasions; and the least glimpse of them is sufficient to make us go on in a course of action to which we have been accustomed. And practical principles appear to grow stronger, absolutely in themselves, by exercise, as well as relatively with regard to contrary principles, which, by being accustomed to submit, do so habitually and of course. And thus a new character, in several respects, may be formed; and many habitudes of life, not given by Nature, but which Nature directs us to acquire.

III. Indeed we may be assured, that we should never have 3
had these capacities of improving by experience, acquired knowledge, and habits, had they not been necessary and intended to be made use of. And accordingly we find them so necessary, and so much intended, that without them we

[5] [There are many facts which justify this suggestion. A blind man improves in the power of touch, through habit, till his nicety is scarcely credible. Perhaps, however, it is not the sensibility which improves, but the judgment. The man who stifles compassion feels less than the man who exercises it. Avarice, as an emotion, seems *strengthened* by hoarding, as are envy and malice by indulgence. The active principle of benevolence, again, becomes almost mechanical, after repeated sights of suffering and appropriate acts of kindness. Facts, or seeming facts of this kind, have induced some to hold "that some passions are increased by habit, others decreased, and others again increased to a certain point, then decreased."—Smith's Sketches of Moral Philosophy, p. 401.]

should be utterly incapable of that, which was the end for which we were made, considered in our temporal capacity only: the employments and satisfactions of our mature state of life.

2 Nature does in no wise qualify us wholly, much less at once, for this mature state of life. Even maturity of understanding and bodily strength, are not only arrived to gradually, but are also very much owing to the continued exercise of our powers of body and mind from infancy. But if we suppose a person brought into the world with both these in maturity, as far as this is conceivable, he would plainly at first be as unqualified for the human life of mature age as an idiot. He would be in a manner distracted with astonishment, and apprehension, and curiosity, and suspense; nor can one guess how long it would be, before he would be familiarized to himself and to the objects about him, enough even to set himself to anything. It may be questioned too, whether the natural information of his sight and hearing would be of any manner of use at all to him in acting, before experience.[6] And it seems that men would be strangely headstrong and self-willed, and disposed to exert themselves with an impetuosity, which would render society insupportable and the living in it impracticable, were it not for some acquired moderation and self-government, some aptitude and readiness in restraining themselves, and concealing their sense of things. Want of everything of this kind which is learned, would render a man as incapable of society as want of language would; or as his natural ignorance of any of the particular employments of life would render him incapable of providing himself with the common conveniences, or supplying the necessary wants of it. In these respects, and probably in many more of which we have no particular notion, mankind is left by Nature an unformed, unfinished creature, utterly deficient and unqualified, before the ac-

[6] [Berkeley has shown in his Theory of Vision that the impressions of sight have to be corrected by touch, or other senses, before men can act upon them. This conclusion, which he reached by reasoning, was verified in the case of a young man touched by Mr. Cheselden, Phil. Trans., anno 1728. Though, it must be added, more has been founded on that case than it will easily bear.]

quirement of knowledge, experience, and habits, for that mature state of life, which was the end of his creation, considering him as related only to this world.[7]

But then, as Nature has endued us with a power of supplying those deficiencies, by acquired knowledge, experience, and habits; so likewise we are placed in a condition, in infancy, childhood, and youth, fitted for it; fitted for our acquiring those qualifications of all sorts, which we stand in need of in mature age. Hence children from their very birth are daily growing acquainted with the objects about them, with the scene in which they are placed, and to have a future part, and learning somewhat or other necessary to the performance of it. The subordinations to which they are accustomed in domestic life, teach them self-government in common behaviour abroad, and prepare them for subjection and obedience to civil authority. What passes before their eyes and daily happens to them, gives them experience, caution against treachery and deceit, together with numberless little rules of action and conduct which we could not live without, and which are learned so insensibly and so perfectly, as to be mistaken perhaps for instinct, though they are the effect of long experience and exercise, as much so as language or knowledge in particular business, or the qualifications and behaviour belonging to the several ranks and professions. Thus the beginning of our days is adapted to be, and is, a state of education in the theory and practice of mature life. We are much assisted in it by example, instruction, and the care of others, but a great deal is left to ourselves to do. And of this, as part is done easily and of course, so part requires diligence and care, the voluntary foregoing many things which we desire, and setting ourselves to what we should have no inclination to, but for the necessity or expedience of it. For that labour and industry, which the station of so many absolutely requires, they would be greatly unqualified for in maturity, as those in other stations would be for any other sorts of application, if both were not accustomed to them in their youth. And according as persons behave themselves in the general education which all go through, and in the particular ones

7 [See, in confirmation of this view, Whately's Pol. Ec., p. 112, and Lecture on Civilization.]

3 adapted to particular employments, their character is formed and made appear; they recommend themselves more or less, and are capable of, and placed in, different stations in the society of mankind.

The former part of life then is to be considered as an important opportunity, which Nature puts into our hands, and which, when lost, is not to be recovered. And our being placed in a state of discipline, throughout this life, for another world, is a providential disposition of things, exactly of the same kind, as our being placed in a state of discipline during childhood for mature age. Our condition in both respects is uniform and of a piece, and comprehended under one and the same general law of Nature.

And if we were not able at all to discern how or in what way the present life could be our preparation for another: this would be no objection against the credibility of its being so. For we do not discern how food and sleep contribute to the growth of the body, nor could have any thought that they would before we had experience. Nor do children at all think on the one hand, that the sports and exercises to which they are so much addicted, contribute to their health and growth; nor, on the other, of the necessity which there is for their being restrained in them; nor are they capable of understanding the use of many parts of discipline, which, nevertheless, they must be made to go through, in order to qualify them for the business of mature age. Were we not able then to discover in what respects the present life could form us for a future one; yet nothing would be more supposable than that it might, in some respects or other, from the general analogy of Providence. And this, for aught I see, might reasonably be said even though we should not take in the consideration of God's moral government over the world. But,

4 IV. Take in this consideration, and consequently, that the character of virtue and piety is a necessary qualification for the future state; and then we may distinctly see, how, and in what respects, the present life may be a preparation for it: since we *want, and are capable of, improvement in that character, by moral and religious habits*; and *the present life is fit to be a state of discipline for such improvement*; in like manner as we have already observed, how, and in what respects infancy

childhood, and youth, are a necessary preparation, and a natural state of discipline for mature age.

Nothing which we at present see would lead us to the thought of a solitary inactive state hereafter: but, if we judge at all from the analogy of Nature, we must suppose, according to the Scripture account of it, that it will be a community. And there is no shadow of anything unreasonable in conceiving, though there be no analogy for it, that this community will be, as the Scripture represents it, under the more immediate, or, if such an expression may be used, the more sensible government of God. Nor is our ignorance, what will be the employments of this happy community, nor our consequent ignorance, what particular scope or occasion there will be for the exercise of veracity, justice, and charity, amongst the members of it with regard to each other, any proof, that there will be no sphere of exercise for those virtues. Much less, if that were possible, is our ignorance any proof, that there will be no occasion for that frame of mind, or character, which is formed by the daily practice of those particular virtues here, and which is a result from it. This at least must be owned in general, that, as the government established in the universe is moral, the character of virtue
and piety must, in some way or other, be the condition of a
our happiness, or the qualification for it.

Now from what is above observed, concerning our natural b
power of habits, it is easy to see, that we are *capable* of moral
improvement by discipline. And how greatly we *want* it, c
need not be proved to any one who is acquainted with the
great wickedness of mankind; or even with those imperfec- 1
tions, which the best are conscious of. But it is not perhaps
distinctly attended to by every one, that the occasion which
human creatures have for discipline, to improve in them this
character of virtue and piety, is to be traced up higher than
to excess in the passions, by indulgence and habits of vice. 2
Mankind, and perhaps all finite creatures, from the very constitution of their nature, before habits of virtue, are deficient, and in danger of deviating from what is right; and therefore
stand in need of virtuous habits, for a security against this
danger. For, together with the general principle of moral (a)
understanding, we have in our inward frame various affections towards particular external objects. These affections

are naturally, and of right, subject to the government of the moral principle, as to the occasions upon which they may be gratified; as to the times, degrees, and manner, in which the objects of them may be pursued; but then the principle of virtue can neither excite them, nor prevent their being excited. On the contrary, they are naturally felt, when the objects of them are present to the mind, not only before all consideration, whether they can be obtained by lawful means, but after it is found they cannot. For the natural objects of affection continue so; the necessaries, conveniences, and pleasures of life, remain naturally desirable; though they cannot be obtained innocently: nay, though they cannot possibly be obtained at all. And when the objects of any affection whatever cannot be obtained without unlawful means; but may be obtained by them: such affection, though its being excited, and its continuing some time in the mind, be as innocent as it is natural and necessary; yet cannot but be conceived to have a tendency to incline persons to venture upon such unlawful means: and therefore must be conceived as putting them in some danger of it. Now, what is the general security against this danger: against their actually deviating from right? As the danger is, so also must the security be, from within: from the practical principle of virtue.[a] And the strengthening or improving this principle,

[a] It may be thought, that sense of interest would as effectually restrain creatures from doing wrong. But if by a *sense of interest* is meant a speculative conviction or belief that such and such indulgence would occasion them greater uneasiness, upon the whole, than satisfaction; it is contrary to present experience to say that this sense of interest is sufficient to restrain them from thus indulging themselves. And if by a *sense of interest* is meant a practical regard to what is upon the whole our happiness, this is not only coincident with the principle of virtue or moral rectitude, but is a part of the idea itself. And it is evident this reasonable self love wants to be improved, as really as any principle in our nature. For we daily see it overmatched, not only by the more boisterous passions, but by curiosity, shame, love of imitation, by anything, even indolence: especially if the interest, the temporal interest, suppose, which is the end of such self-love, be at a distance. So greatly are profligate men mistaken when they affirm they are wholly governed by interestedness and self-love. And so little cause is there for moralists to disclaim this principle. See pp. 78, 79.

considered as practical, or as a principle of action, will lessen the danger, or increase the security against it. And this moral principle is capable of improvement, by proper discipline and exercise: by recollecting the practical impressions which example and experience have made upon us: and, instead of following humour and mere inclination, by continually attending to the equity and right of the case, in whatever we are engaged, be it in greater or less matters: and accustoming ourselves always to act upon it; as being itself the just and natural motive of action; and as this moral course of behaviour must necessarily, under Divine government, be our final interest. *Thus the principle of virtue, improved into a habit, of which improvement we are thus capable, will plainly be, in proportion to the strength of it, a security against the danger which finite creatures are in, from the very nature of propension, or particular affections.* This way of putting the matter, supposes particular affections to remain in a future state, which it is scarce possible to avoid supposing. And if they do, we clearly see, that acquired habits of virtue and self-government may be necessary for the regulation of them. However, though we were not distinctly to take in this supposition, but to speak only in general, the thing really comes to the same. For habits of virtue, thus acquired by discipline, are improvement in virtue: and improvement in virtue must be advancement in happiness, if the government of the universe be moral.

From these things we may observe, and it will further show this our natural and original need of being improved by discipline, how it comes to pass, that creatures made upright fall; and that those who preserve their uprightness, by so doing, raise themselves to a more secure state of virtue. To say that the former is accounted for by the nature of liberty, is to say no more, than that an event's actually happening is accounted for by a mere possibility of its happening. But it seems distinctly conceivable from the very nature of particular affections or propensions. For, suppose creatures intended for such a particular state of life, for which such propensions were necessary: suppose them endued with such propensions, together with moral understanding, as well including a practical sense of virtue, as a speculative perception of it; and that all these several principles, both natural and

moral, forming an inward constitution of mind, were in the most exact proportion possible; *i. e.*, in a proportion the most exactly adapted to their intended state of life; such creatures would be made upright, or finitely perfect. Now particular propensions, from their very nature, must be felt, the objects of them being present;[9] though they cannot be gratified at all, or not with the allowance of the moral principle. But if they can be gratified without its allowance, or by contradicting it, then they must be conceived to have some tendency in how low a degree soever, yet some tendency, to induce persons to such forbidden gratification. This tendency, in some one particular propension, may be increased, by the greater frequency of occasions naturally exciting it, than of occasions exciting others. The least voluntary indulgence in forbidden circumstances, though but in thought, will increase this wrong tendency; and may increase it further, till, peculiar conjunctures perhaps conspiring, it becomes effect; and danger of deviating from right, ends in actual deviation from it: a danger necessarily arising from the very nature of propension; and which therefore could not have been prevented, though it might have been escaped, or got innocently through.[10] The case would be, as if we were to suppose a straight path marked out for a person, in which such a degree of attention would keep him steady: but if he would not attend in this degree, any one of a thousand objects, catching his eye, might lead him out of it. Now it is impossible to say, how much even the first full overt act of irregu-

[9] [This is the thought which Dr. O'Brien has expanded in illustrating the temptation of our Lord, showing that Christ might be *tempted*, yet be without sin.—Two Sermons upon Heb. iv. 15, preached in the Chapel of Trinity College, Dublin [1832].

[10] [This supposed case is, it will be noticed, a most just history of the fall. In that history we have—the conviction of duty, the contemplation of the pleasure which sin may produce, the offer on the part of the tempter of a lie in place of the truth, the hope that desire may be indulged and the punishment averted, desire growing stronger, conscience feebler, till the will consents and the act is done. This act, it must be added, is not so much a sin as a "fall." It implies the deliberate preference of a lie to the truth, of passion to conscience, of self to God. Peace and favour with him are forthwith exchanged for enmity and dread.]

larity might disorder the inward constitution; unsettle the adjustments, and alter the proportions which formed it, and in which the uprightness of its make consisted: but repetition of irregularities would produce habits. And thus the constitution would be spoiled; and creatures made upright, become corrupt and depraved in their settled character, proportionably to their repeated irregularities in occasional acts. But, on the contrary, these creatures might have improved (b) and raised themselves to a higher and more secure state of virtue, by the contrary behaviour: by steadily following the moral principle, supposed to be one part of their nature: and thus withstanding that unavoidable danger of defection, which necessarily arose from propension, the other part of it. For, by thus preserving their integrity for some time, their danger would lessen; since propensions, by being inured to submit, would do it more easily and of course: and their security against this lessening danger would increase; since the moral principle would gain additional strength by exercise: both which things are implied in the notion of virtuous habits. Thus then vicious indulgence is not only criminal in itself, but also depraves the inward constitution and character. And virtuous self-government is not only right in itself, but also improves the inward constitution or character: and may improve it to such a degree, that though we should suppose it impossible, for particular affections to be absolutely coincident with the moral principle; and consequently should allow, that such creatures as have been above supposed, would for ever remain defectible; yet their danger of actually deviating from right may be almost infinitely lessened, and they fully fortified against what remains of it; if that may be called danger, against which there is an adequate effectual security. But still, this their higher perfection may continue to consist in habits of virtue formed in a state of discipline, and this their more complete security remain to proceed from them. And thus it is plainly conceivable, that (c) creatures without blemish, as they came out of the hands of God, may be in danger of going wrong; and so may stand in need of the security of virtuous habits, additional to the moral principle wrought into their natures by him. That which is the ground of their danger, or their want of security, may be considered as a deficiency in them, to which virtuous

habits are the natural supply. And as they are naturally capable of being raised and improved by discipline, it may be a thing fit and requisite that they should be placed in circumstances with an eye to it: in circumstances peculiarly fitted to be, to them, a state of discipline for their improvement in virtue.

But how much more strongly must this hold with respect to those, who have corrupted their natures, are fallen from their original rectitude, and whose passions are become excessive by repeated violations of their inward constitution? Upright creatures may want to be improved; depraved creatures want to be renewed. Education and discipline, which may be in all degrees and sorts of gentleness and of severity, is expedient for those: but must be absolutely necessary for these. For these, discipline of the severer sort too, and in the higher degrees of it, must be necessary, in order to wear out vicious habits; to recover their primitive strength of self-government, which indulgence must have weakened; to repair, as well as raise into an habit, the moral principle, in order to their arriving at a secure state of virtuous happiness.

Now whoever will consider the thing, may clearly see, that the present world is *peculiarly fit* to be a state of discipline for this purpose, to such as will set themselves to mend and improve. For, the various temptations with which we are surrounded; our experience of the deceits of wickedness; having been in many instances led wrong ourselves; the great viciousness of the world; the infinite disorders consequent upon it; our being made acquainted with pain and sorrow, either from our own feeling of it, or from the sight of it in others; these things, though some of them may indeed produce wrong effects upon our minds, yet when duly reflected upon, have, all of them, a direct tendency to bring us to a settled moderation and reasonableness of temper: the contrary both to thoughtless levity, and also to that unrestrained self-will, and violent bent to follow present inclination, which may be observed in undisciplined minds. Such experience as the present state affords, of the frailty of our nature; of the boundless extravagance of ungoverned passion; of the power which an Infinite Being has over us, by the various capacities of misery which he has given us;

in short, that kind and degree of experience which the present state affords us, that the constitution of Nature is such as to admit the possibility, the danger, and the actual event of creatures losing their innocence and happiness, and becoming vicious and wretched; hath a tendency to give us a practical sense of things very different from a mere speculative knowledge, that we are liable to vice, and capable of misery. And who knows, whether the security of creatures in the highest and most settled state of perfection, may not in part arise, from their having had such a sense of things as this, formed, and habitually fixed within them, in some state of probation?[11] And passing through the present world with that moral attention which is necessary to the acting a right part in it, may leave everlasting impressions of this sort upon our minds. But to be a little more distinct: allurements to what is wrong; difficulties in the discharge of our duty; our not being able to act an uniform right part without some thought and care; and the opportunities which we have, or imagine we have, of avoiding what we dislike, or obtaining what we desire, by unlawful means, when we either cannot do it at all, or at least not so easily, by lawful ones; these things, *i. e.*, the snares and temptations of vice, are what render the present world peculiarly fit to be a state of discipline, to those who will preserve their integrity: because they render being upon our guard, resolution, and the denial of our passions, necessary in order to that end. And the exercise of such particular recollection, intention of mind, and self-government, in the practice of virtue, has, from the make of our nature, a peculiar tendency to form

[11] [The force of this remark must not be overlooked. The fall of angels shows that even in a state where there is no evil, temptations to evil may spring up, and that to resist them *men may need* characters disciplined on earth. Or to speak perhaps more accurately, things innocent may become temptations to undisciplined natures, while natures thoroughly disciplined would never feel them. Of course, God has pledged his word to the perpetuity of that heavenly state—*sin shall never enter it—and he might secure* the fulfilment of it by making sin physically impossible: but he seems rather to act in accordance with the moral nature he has given us. Heaven will be for us secure, because our holiness will be by discipline made perfect.]

habits of virtue: as implying, not only a real but also a more continued, and a more intense exercise of the virtuous principle; or a more constant and a stronger effort of virtue exerted into act. Thus suppose a person to know himself to be in particular danger, for some time, of doing anything wrong, which yet he fully resolves not to do: continued recollection, and keeping upon his guard, in order to make good his resolution, is a *continued* exerting of that act of virtue in a *high degree*, which need have been, and perhaps would have been, only *instantaneous* and *weak*, had the temptation been so. It is indeed ridiculous to assert, that self-denial is essential to virtue and piety: but it would have been nearer the truth, though not strictly the truth itself, to have said, that it is essential to discipline and improvement. For though actions materially virtuous, which have no sort of difficulty, but are perfectly agreeable to our particular inclinations, may possibly be done only from these particular inclinations, and so may not be any exercise of the principle of virtue, *i. e.*, not be virtuous actions at all; yet, on the contrary, they may be an exercise of that principle: and when they are, they have a tendency to form and fix the habit of virtue. But when the exercise of the virtuous principle is more continued, oftener repeated, and more intense; as it must be in circumstances of danger, temptation, and difficulty, of any kind and in any degree; this tendency is increased proportionably, and a more confirmed habit is the consequence.[13]

[13] [It is here—when describing man's recovery, Butler speaks of nothing more as necessary than a strenuous and sustained effort on our part to acquire new habits of holiness—that our author's theology seems defective. Now the teaching of Scripture is, that an *entire* change in the condition of our moral faculties, what may be called a complete renovation of them, is indispensable to our holiness—that men, unassisted from above, do not, and of themselves, will not effect such a change—that this change, which *begins* their new life, is effected by a Divine influence and through the truth of the gospel. All this must be kept in mind when interpreting evangelically this first part of Butler's treatise. . . . At the same time, Butler's reasoning is complete as it stands, for under the economy of grace the law of habit has *not* been repealed, nor has any other of the laws of human nature, on which this argument proceeds. . . .

This undoubtedly holds to a certain length; but how far it may hold I know not. Neither our intellectual powers nor our bodily strength can be improved beyond such a degree; and both may be over-wrought. Possibly there may be somewhat analogous to this, with respect to the moral character, which is scarce worth considering. And I mention it only, lest it should come into some persons' thoughts, not as an exception to the foregoing observations which perhaps it is, but as a confutation of them, which it is not: and there may be several other exceptions. Observations of this kind cannot be supposed to hold minutely, and in every case. It is enough that they hold in general. And these plainly hold so far, as that from them they may be seen distinctly, which is all that is intended by them, that *the present world is peculiarly fit to be a state of discipline, for our improvement in virtue and piety;* in the same sense as some sciences, by requiring and engaging the attention, not, to be sure, of such persons as will not, but of such as will, set themselves to them, are fit to form the mind to habits of attention.

Indeed the present state is so far from proving, in event, a discipline of virtue to the generality of men, that on the contrary, they seem to make it a discipline of vice. And the viciousness of the world is in different ways the great temptation, which renders it a state of virtuous discipline, in the degree it is, to good men. The whole end and the

It should be remembered, too, in defence of Butler, that all through this first part he is discussing *natural* religion, and using language appropriate to it. Truths and forms of expression borrowed from the New Testament would therefore be less appropriate. The mistake will be with the reader, if he regard Butler's phraseology here as adapted to set forth the whole of the gospel.

'The principle of virtue' of which Butler speaks is in evangelical language, and for fallen man, faith in the doctrine of the cross—"the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth." Let a man once admit that Christ is the gift of the Father's love; that in dying he did homage to the sanctity of law; that we deserve what he suffered; that in pleading his death, we acknowledge our sin, and must resolve to be freed from it, looking to God's grace for help; and all is changed. God is regarded with confidence, sin with abhorrence, the law with reverence, Christ with love, and in the end "the world is crucified (and thus powerless) to us, and we unto the world."]

whole occasion of mankind's being placed in such a state as
a the present, is not pretended to be accounted for. That which appears amidst the general corruption, is that there are some persons who having within them the principle of amendment and recovery, attend to and follow the notices of virtue and religion, be they more clear or more obscure, which are afforded them; and that the present world is not
b only an exercise of virtue in these persons but an exercise of it in ways and degrees, peculiarly apt to improve it; apt to improve it, in some respects, even beyond what would be by the exercise of it required in a perfectly virtuous society, or in a society of equally imperfect virtue with themselves. But that the present world does not actually become a state of moral discipline to many, even to the generality, *i. e.* that they do not improve or grow better in it, cannot be urged as
a a proof that it was not intended for moral discipline by any who at all observe the analogy of Nature. For, of the numerous seeds of vegetables and bodies of animals, which are adapted and put in the way, to improve to such a point or state of natural maturity and perfection, we do not see perhaps that one in a million actually does. Far the greatest part of them decay before they are improved to it, and appear to be absolutely destroyed. Yet no one, who does not deny all final causes, will deny that those seeds and bodies, which do attain to that point of maturity and perfection, answer the end for which they were really designed by Nature; and therefore that Nature designed them for such perfection. And I cannot forbear adding, though it is not to the present purpose, that the *appearance* of such an amazing *waste* in Nature, with respect to these seeds and bodies, by foreign causes, is to us as unaccountable, as what is much more terrible, the present and future ruin of so many moral agents by themselves, *i. e.* by vice.

3 Against this whole notion of moral discipline, it may be objected in another way, that so far as a course of behaviour, materially virtuous, proceeds from hope and fear, so far it is only a discipline and strengthening of self-love.[18]

[18] [Hobbes had maintained that "fear and hope" were the chief springs of what men call virtue. Later, Shaftesbury had taken a juster view, holding that these are but selfish motives to virtue,

But doing what God commands, because he commands it, is obedience, though it proceeds from hope or fear. And a course of such obedience will form habits of it. And a constant regard to veracity, justice, and charity, may form distinct habits of those particular virtues, and will certainly form habits of self-government, and of denying our inclinations, whenever veracity, justice, or charity requires it. Nor is there any foundation for this great nicety, with which some affect to distinguish in this case, in order to depreciate all religion proceeding from hope or fear. For veracity, justice, and charity, regard to God's authority, and to our own chief interest, are not only all three coincident, but each of them is, in itself, a just and natural motive or principle of action. And he who begins a good life from any one of them, and perseveres in it, as he is already in some degree, so he cannot fail of becoming more and more, of that character, which is correspondent to the constitution of Nature as moral; and to the relation which God stands in to us as moral Governor of it; nor consequently can he fail of obtaining that happiness,[14] which this constitution and relation necessarily suppose connected with that character.

These several observations concerning the active principle of virtue and obedience to God's commands, are applicable to passive submission or resignation to his will; which is another essential part of a right character, connected with the former, and very much in our power to form ourselves to. It may be imagined that nothing but afflictions can give occasion for or require this virtue; that it can have no respect to nor be any way necessary to qualify for, a state

though sometimes efficacious in "restraining from vice, and in guarding a feeble penitence" (Mackintosh). Butler substantially agrees in this view. Both, however, admit that there is a hope of heaven identical with the love of holiness itself, and a fear of hell identical with the dread of sin—the hope that in heaven sin will cease. "The holiness of heaven is (in this view), still more attractive than its happiness,"—(T. Erskine, 'Freeness of the Gospel,' p. 32;) and the hope of it is one of the noblest motives to virtue.]

[14] [So John Smith: "Happiness and holiness are but two several notions of one thing. Hell is rather a nature than a place, and heaven cannot be so well defined by anything *without* us, as by something *within*.—'Select Discourses.']

of perfect happiness; but it is not experience which can
4 make us think thus. Prosperity itself, whilst anything
supposed desirable is not ours, begets extravagant and un-
a bounded thoughts. Imagination is altogether as much a
source of discontent, as anything in our external condition.
It is indeed true, that there can be no scope for patience,
when sorrow shall be no more; but there may be need of a
temper of mind, which shall have been formed by patience.
For though self-love, considered merely as an active prin-
ciple leading us to pursue our chief interest, cannot but be
uniformly coincident with the principle of obedience to God's
commands, our interest being rightly understood; because
this obedience and the pursuit of our own chief interest,
must be in every case one and the same thing; yet it may
be questioned whether self-love, considered merely as the
desire of our own interest or happiness, can, from its nature,
be thus absolutely and uniformly coincident with the will of
God; any more than particular affections can;[14] coincident
in such sort, as not to be liable to be excited upon occasions
and in degrees, impossible to be gratified consistently with
b the constitution of things, or the Divine appointments. So
that *habits* of resignation may, upon this account, be re-
quisite for all creatures; habits I say, which signify what is
formed by use. However, in general it is obvious that both
self-love and particular affections in human creatures, con-
sidered only as passive feelings, distort and rend the mind;
and therefore stand in need of discipline. Now, denial of
those particular affections, in the course of active virtue and
obedience to God's will, has a tendency to moderate them;
and seems also to have a tendency to habituate the mind, to
be easy and satisfied with that degree of happiness which is
allotted us, *i. e.* to moderate self-love. But the proper dis-
cipline for resignation is affliction. For a right behaviour
under that trial, recollecting ourselves so as to consider it
in the view in which religion teaches us to consider it, as
from the hand of God; receiving it as what he appoints, or
thinks proper to permit, in his world and under his govern-
ment; this will habituate the mind to a dutiful submission;
and such submission, together with the active principle of

[14] P. 84.

obedience, make up the temper and character in us, which answers to his sovereignty, and which absolutely belongs to the condition of our being, as dependent creatures. Nor can it be said that this is only breaking the mind to a submission to mere power; for mere power may be accidental, and precarious, and usurped; but it is forming within ourselves the temper of resignation to His rightful authority, who is by nature, supreme over all.[15]

Upon the whole, such a character and such qualifications are necessary for a mature state of life in the present world, as nature alone does in no wise bestow; but has put it upon us, in great part, to acquire in our progress from one stage of life to another, from childhood to mature age; put it upon us to acquire them, by giving us capacities of doing it, and by placing us in the beginning of life, in a condition fit for it. And this is a general analogy to our condition in the present world, as in a state of moral discipline for another. It is in vain then to object against the credibility of the present life's being intended for this purpose, that all the trouble and the danger, unavoidably accompanying such discipline, might have been saved us, by our being made at once the creatures and the characters, *which we were to be*. For we experience, that *what we were to be*, was to be the effect of *what we would do*; and that the general conduct of nature is, not to save us trouble or danger, but to make us capable of going through them, and to put it upon us to do so. Acquirements of our own experience and habits, are the *natural* supply to our deficiencies, and security against our dangers; since it is as plainly natural to set ourselves to acquire the qualifications, as the external things which we stand in need of. In particular, it is as plainly a general law of Nature, that we should, with regard to our temporal

[15] [Professor Fitzgerald adds here an instructive suggestion, "while the general union of utility with virtue answers a plain moral purpose, the occasional apparent interruption of that connexion—so that virtue brings disadvantages—may answer a moral purpose also." Virtue promotes happiness, God therefore is upon its side, and it becomes us to be virtuous. Virtue is not *always* followed by happiness, God therefore means us to love it for its own sake. "My yoke is easy," illustrates the first truth; "Take up your *cross* and follow me," the second.]

interest, form and cultivate practical principles within us, by attention, use, and discipline, as anything whatever is a natural law; chiefly in the beginning of life, but also throughout the whole course of it. And the alternative is left to our choice, either to improve ourselves, and better our condition, or in default of such improvement to remain deficient and wretched. It is, therefore, perfectly credible from the analogy of Nature, that the same may be our case, with respect to the happiness of a future state, and the qualifications necessary for it.

There is a third thing, which may seem implied in the present world's being a state of probation; that it is a theatre of action, for the manifestation of persons' characters with respect to a future one; not to be sure to an all-knowing Being, but to this creation or part of it. This may, perhaps, be only a consequence of our being in a state of probation in the other senses. However, it is not impossible that men's showing and making manifest what is in their heart, what their real character is, may have respect to a future life, in ways and manners which we are not acquainted with; particularly it may be a means, for the Author of Nature does not appear to do anything without means, of their being disposed of suitably to their characters, and of its being known to the creation by way of example, that they are thus disposed of. But not to enter upon any conjectural account of this, one may just mention, that the manifestation of persons' characters contributes very much in various ways, to the carrying on a great part of that general course of Nature, respecting mankind, which comes under our observation at present. I shall only add, that probation, in both these senses, as well as in that treated of in the foregoing chapter, is implied in moral government; since by persons' behaviour under it, their characters cannot but be manifested, and if they behave well, improved.

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE OPINION OF NECESSITY, CONSIDERED AS INFLUENCING PRACTICE.

[On the supposition that necessity is reconcilable with the experienced constitution of Nature, the question, Is it also with religion: answered in the affirmative.

Thus far the controversy has been with the deist. Atheism, however, may be supposed to maintain that necessity itself accounts for the existence of things—an opinion which needs first to be examined.

A Does necessity (supposed reconcilable with Nature) destroy the proof of an intelligent Author, and so support Atheism? No; for,

1 Necessity does not set aside an agent;

2 Nor does it exclude design and intelligence, either in men or in God.

3 It is true that men ascribe (in a loose way) the existence of God to necessity; but this is a new meaning of the word, and is intended merely to imply that, prior to design in Nature, there must be a Divine existence. Answer restated.

B Does necessity, supposed reconcilable with Nature, destroy the belief that we are under moral government? No; for,

1 In practical matters (therefore religion included) necessity is as if it were false: *e.g.*,

a Let a child act upon it, and he will find that it is either not true, or not acted upon as true.

b Or a man in common life. Hence, probably, men are free. Upon this, however, Butler does not here insist.

Nor let any be surprised that, upon the opinion of necessity being true, we act upon it as false, and thence blame our reason; for God has given us practical principles, which we follow instead of reason, and to object to these is mere conceit.

2 Necessity, if true, is reconcilable with the possession of a moral character, the foundation of veracity, benevolence, and justice, both in us and in God.

a That he possesses such a character is shown by his natural character, and by final causes.

b Necessity is reconcilable with *some* kind of character in us; for it hinders neither truth nor falsehood.

If this be denied, and it be said, Admit necessity, and there can be no moral character in us, and so no just punishment. Answer, The necessity which destroys the injustice of an act destroys the injustice of a punishment; and, after all, our conviction of a character remains: we still deem ourselves just or unjust, necessity notwithstanding.

c So necessity is reconcilable with the character of God: as reconcilable with veracity and justice as with any other.

Obj. And if it be objected that necessity destroys the proof of such character, by making the happiness that follows virtue a mere necessity, and no part of God's arrangement—answer,

1 Happiness follows conduct, and is a consequence of *it*, and not of necessity or fate: besides,

2 God governs according to some rule; and veracity and justice seem the natural rule with One who can have no competition with his creatures.

6 Nor, further, does necessity destroy the obligations and proofs of religion, such as the following:

1 The proof, from final causes, of an intelligent Creator;

2 The proof, from present government, of a future government;

3 The proof, from our moral faculty, of the final reward of virtue: Which faculty is a rule, having authority, and enforcing its decisions with sanctions. Every rule implies such sanctions. But, in this rule, the sanctions are expressed in the very sense of good or ill desert connected with it, and the dread of future punishment.

Nor does any objection of necessity lie against this faculty or its conclusions; the existence of the faculty being a fact, and the conclusion being drawn immediately from it.

4 This reasoning is confirmed by various facts, such as the tendencies of virtue and vice; the punishment of vice, as mischievous to society, and as vice.

5 The external evidence of religion, as,

a The general consent of all ages and countries:

b The early belief in religion, which implies either the naturalness of religion, or the Divine origin of it; which latter is probable on various grounds: and,

c Ancient tradition of a revelation, which has force irrespective of the claims of any particular book, or the present purity of any religious system.

Note carefully, that in studying all such doctrines our faculties are peculiarly liable to err; so that, though we are not to neglect them, we must be on our guard.

D After all, the objector may say, I cannot confute this argument, or answer these proofs; nor need I. We are not free, whatever we think, and so are not to be punished; and any system that affirms we are must be rejected. But answer, Experience shows

The conclusion is false wherever the fallacy lies. Either we are free and so punished; or, being necessary agents we are punished still,—now and in the life to come.

From the whole gather a double conclusion:

1 Necessity, supposed consistent with the present constitution of things, does in no sort prove that we shall not be rewarded eternally according to our deserts; nor does it affect the proof that we shall. It leaves untouched all religion, natural and revealed.

2 Hence the only senses in which necessity, if taught in religion, can be said to destroy religion:

a Practically, by leading atheists to encourage themselves in vice:

b Really, by contradicting our experience that we are free, and the course of Nature:

c Though not in this sense, that it is reconcilable with Nature, but not with religion.]

Throughout the foregoing treatise it appears, that the condition of mankind, considered as inhabitants of this world only, and under the government of God which we experience, is greatly analogous to our condition, as designed for another world, or under that further government, which religion teaches us. If therefore any assert, as a fatalist must, that the opinion of universal necessity[1] is reconcilable with the

[1] [There are few words in the English language more ambiguous than "necessity." It is used in three senses, distinct, yet in some connexions not dissimilar. (1.) Sometimes it expresses the relation of cause and effect, or of things uniformly connected, and so of premises and conclusion. The world has necessarily a Creator; death is a necessity of our present state; the angles of a triangle are necessarily equal to two right angles, are examples. (2.) Sometimes it expresses the opposite of freedom—compulsion against one's will. (3.) It expresses also the opposite of doubt—certainty of knowledge, applied properly to the thing known; *e.g.*, God foresees our acts, therefore they are necessary. Now the only sense of neces-

former, there immediately arises a question in the way of analogy, whether he must not also own it to be reconcilable with the latter, *i.e.* with the system of religion itself, and the proof of it. The reader then will observe, that the question now before us is not absolute, Whether the opinion of fate be reconcilable with religion; but hypothetical, Whether, upon supposition of its being reconcilable with the constitution of Nature, it be not reconcilable with religion also; or what pretence a fatalist, not other persons, but a fatalist, has to conclude from his opinion, that there can be no such thing as religion. And as the puzzle and obscurity, which must unavoidably arise from arguing upon so absurd a supposition as that of universal necessity, will, I fear, easily be seen; it will, I hope, as easily be excused.

But since it has been all along taken for granted, as a thing proved, that there is an intelligent Author of Nature, or natural Governor of the world; and since an *objection* may be made against the proof of this, from the opinion of universal necessity, as it may be supposed, that such necessity will itself account for the origin and preservation of all things: it is requisite that this objection be distinctly answered, or that it be shown that a fatality, supposed consistent with what we certainly experience, does not destroy
A the proof of an intelligent Author and Governor of Nature; before we proceed to consider whether it destroys the proof

sity in which it can be said to destroy responsibility is the *second*; though many (and Butler among them) have attempted to show that responsibility must be destroyed by admitting necessity in the first, or, indeed, in any sense. God may foreknow every act of every moral agent, and so those acts be (in the third sense) necessary. He may even see causes and influences at work which will end in those acts, and so those acts be necessary in the *first* sense, and yet every moral agent be free; that is, the agent will act voluntarily and without constraint. The moral agent is in each case responsible; nor does that responsibility cease till he acts necessarily in the *second* sense, and things are done under compulsion and against his will. These distinctions are not necessary to an appreciation of Butler's main reasoning; but they are important in estimating his opinion on necessity, and in deciding various theological questions. See Whately's Notes to King on Predestination, and Isaac Taylor's Essay on Edwards on the Will.]

of a moral Governor of it, or of our being in a state of religion.

Now when it is said by a fatalist that the whole constitution of Nature and the actions of men, that everything, and every mode and circumstance of everything, is necessary, and could not possibly have been otherwise; it is to be
observed, that this necessity does not exclude deliberation, 1
choice, preference, and acting from certain principles, and to certain ends: because all this is matter of undoubted experience, acknowledged by all, and what every man may, every moment, be conscious of. And from hence it follows that necessity, alone and of itself, is in no sort an account of the constitution of Nature, and how things came *to be* and *to*
continue as they are; but only an account of this *circumstance* 2
relating to their origin and continuance, that they could not have been otherwise than they are and have been. The assertion that everything is by necessity of Nature, is not an answer to the question, Whether the world came into being as it is, by an intelligent agent forming it thus, or not; but to quite another question, Whether it came into being as it is, in that way and manner which we call *necessarily*, or in that way and manner which we call *freely*. For suppose further that one who was a fatalist, and one who kept to this natural sense of things, and believed himself a free agent, were disputing together and vindicating their respective opinions, and they should happen to instance in a house; they would agree that it was built by an architect. Their difference concerning necessity and freedom would occasion no difference of judgment concerning this, but only concerning another matter, whether the architect built it necessarily or freely. Suppose then they should proceed to inquire concerning the constitution of Nature: in a lax way of speaking, one of them might say it was by necessity, and the other by freedom; but if they had any meaning to their words, as the latter must mean a free agent, so the former must at length be reduced to mean an agent, whether he would say one or more, acting by necessity; for abstract notions can do nothing. Indeed we ascribe to God a necessary existence, uncaused by any agent. For we find within ourselves the idea of infinity, *i.e.* immensity and eternity, impossible, even

in imagination, to be removed out of being. We seem to discern intuitively, that there must, and cannot but be some-
(2) what external to ourselves, answering this idea, or the archetype of it. And from hence (for *this abstract*, as much as any other, implies a *concrete*) we conclude that there is, and cannot but be, an infinite, an immense eternal Being existing, prior to all design contributing to his existence, and
3 exclusive of it.[2] And from the scantiness of language, a manner of speaking has been introduced, that necessity is the foundation, the reason, the account of the existence of God. But it is not alleged, nor can it be at all intended, that *everything* exists as it does by this kind of necessity, a necessity antecedent in Nature to design: it cannot, I say, be meant that everything exists as it does, by this kind of necessity, upon several accounts; and particularly because it is admitted that design, in the actions of men, contributes to many alterations in Nature. For if any deny this, I shall not pretend to reason with them.

From these things it follows, first, That when a fatalist asserts that everything is *by necessity*, he must mean *by an agent* acting *necessarily*; he must I say mean this, for I am very sensible he would not choose to mean it: and secondly, That the necessity by which such an agent is supposed to act does not exclude intelligence and design. So that, were the system of fatality admitted, it would just as much account for the formation of the world as for the structure of a house, and no more. Necessity as much requires and supposes a necessary agent, as freedom requires and supposes a free agent to be the former of the world. And the appearances of *design* and of *final causes* in the constitution of Nature as really prove this acting agent to be an *intelligent designer*, or to act from choice, upon the scheme of necessity, supposed possible, as upon that of freedom.

B It appearing thus that the notion of necessity does not

2 [This argument—that because there is in us the idea of infinity, *therefore* there must be an infinite Being—is not now deemed very satisfactory, though it was a favourite one in Butler's day, and is sanctioned by Cudworth, Waterland, and Samuel Clarke. Butler, it will be noticed, expresses his approval only incidentally; and his reasoning—that "abstract notions can do nothing"—is still sound,

destroy the proof that there is an intelligent Author of Nature and natural Governor of the world, the present question, which the analogy before mentioned suggests,[3] and which, I think, it will answer, is this: Whether the opinion of necessity, supposed consistent with possibility, with the constitution of the world, and the natural government which we experience exercised over it, destroys all reasonable ground of belief that we are in a state of religion, or whether that opinion be reconcilable with religion, with the system, and the proof of it.

Suppose then a fatalist to educate any one, from his youth up, in his own principles; that the child should reason upon them, and conclude, that since he cannot possibly behave otherwise than he does, he is not a subject of blame or commendation, nor can deserve to be rewarded or punished: imagine him to eradicate the very perceptions of blame and commendation out of his mind by means of this system; to form his temper, and character, and behaviour to it; and from it to judge of the treatment he was to expect, say from reasonable men, upon his coming abroad into the world; as the fatalist judges from this system what he is to expect from the Author of Nature, and with regard to a future state. I cannot forbear stopping here to ask, whether any one of common sense would think fit that a child should be put upon these speculations, and be left to apply them to practice. And a man has little pretence to reason who is not sensible that we are all children in speculations of this kind. However, the child would doubtless be highly delighted to find himself freed from the restraints of fear and shame with which his playfellows were fettered and embarrassed, and highly conceited in his superior knowledge so far beyond his years. But conceit and vanity would be the least bad part of the influence which these principles must have, when thus reasoned and acted upon during the course of his education. He must either be allowed to go on and be the plague of all about him, and himself too, even to his own destruction: or else correction must be continually made use of, to supply the want of those natural perceptions of blame and commendation which we have supposed

[3] P. 115.

to be removed, and to give him a practical impression of what he had reasoned himself out of the belief of, that he was in fact an accountable child, and to be punished for doing what he was forbid. It is therefore in reality impossible but that the correction which he must meet with, in the course of his education, must convince him, that if the scheme he was instructed in were not false, yet that he reasoned inconclusively upon it, and somehow or other misapplied it to practice and common life; as what the fatalist experiences of the conduct of Providence at present ought in all reason to convince him, that this scheme is misapplied when applied to the subject of religion.[4] But supposing the child's temper could remain still formed to the system, and his expectation of the treatment he was to have in the world be regulated by it, so as to expect that no reasonable man would blame or punish him for anything which he should do, because he could not help doing it: upon this supposition it is manifest he would, upon his coming abroad into the world, be insupportable to society, and the treatment which he would receive from it would render it so to him; and he could not fail of doing somewhat, very soon, for which he would be delivered over into the hands of civil justice. And thus, in the end, he would be convinced of the obligations he was under to his wise instructor. Or suppose
5 this scheme of fatality, in any other way applied to practice, such practical application of it will be found equally absurd, equally fallacious in a practical sense: for instance, that if a man be destined to live such a time, he shall live to it, though he take no care of his own preservation; or if he be destined to die before that time, no care can prevent it: therefore all care about preserving one's life is to be neglected, which is the fallacy instanced in by the ancients. But now, on the contrary, none of these practical absurdities can be drawn from reasoning upon the supposition that we are free; but all such reasoning with regard to the common affairs of life is justified by experience. And therefore, though it were admitted that this opinion of necessity were speculatively true, yet, with regard to practice, it is as if it were false, so far as our experience reaches; that is, to the

[4] P. 126.

whole of our present life. For the constitution of the present world, and the condition in which we are actually placed, is as if we were free. And it may perhaps justly be concluded, that since the whole process of action, through every step of it, suspense, deliberation, inclining one way, determining, and at last doing as we determine, is as if we were free, therefore we are so. But the thing here insisted upon is, that under the present natural government of the world, we find we are treated and dealt with as if we were free, prior to all consideration whether we are or not. Were this opinion therefore of necessity admitted to be ever so true, yet such is in fact our condition and the natural course of things, that whenever we apply it to life and practice, this application of it always misleads us, and cannot but mislead us, in a most dreadful manner, with regard to our present interest. And how can people think themselves so very secure then, that the same application of the same opinion may not mislead them also, in some analogous manner, with respect to a future, a more general and more important interest? For religion being a practical subject, and the analogy of Nature showing us that we have not faculties to apply this opinion, were it a true one, to practical subjects; whenever we do apply it to the subject of religion, and thence conclude that we are free from its obligations, it is plain this conclusion cannot be depended upon. There will still remain just reason to think, whatever appearances are, that we deceive ourselves; in somewhat of a like manner as when people fancy they can draw contradictory conclusions from the idea of infinity.

From these things together the attentive reader will see it follows, that if upon supposition of freedom the evidence of religion be conclusive, it remains so upon supposition of necessity, because the notion of necessity is not applicable to practical subjects: *i. e.* with respect to them, is as if it were not true. Nor does this contain any reflection upon reason, but only upon what is unreasonable. For to pretend to act upon reason, in opposition to practical principles, which the Author of our nature gave us to act upon; and to pretend to apply our reason to subjects with regard to which our own short views, and even our experience will show us it cannot be depended upon; and such, at best, the

subject of necessity must be; this is vanity, conceit, and unreasonableness.

But this is not all. For we find within ourselves a will, and are conscious of a character. Now if this, in us, be reconcilable with fate, it is reconcilable with it in the Author of Nature. And besides, natural government and final causes imply a character and a will in the Governor and Designer;[5] a will concerning the creatures whom he governs. The Author of Nature then being certainly of some character or other, notwithstanding necessity, it is evident this necessity is as reconcilable with the particular character of benevolence, veracity, and justice in him, which attributes are the foundation of religion, as with any other character: since we find this necessity no more hinders *men* from being benevolent than cruel, true than faithless, just than unjust, or if the fatalist pleases, what we call unjust. For it is said indeed, that what upon supposition of freedom would be just punishment, upon supposition of necessity becomes manifestly unjust, because it is punishment inflicted for doing that which persons could not avoid doing. As if the necessity, which is supposed to destroy the injustice of murder, for instance, would not also destroy the injustice of punishing it. However, as little to the purpose as this objection is in itself, it is very much to the purpose to observe from it how the notions of justice and injustice remain, even whilst we endeavour to suppose them removed; how they force themselves upon the mind, even whilst we are making suppositions destructive of them; for there is not perhaps a man in the world but would be ready to make this objection at first thought.

Obj. But though it is most evident that universal necessity, if it be reconcilable with anything, is reconcilable with that character in the Author of Nature, which is the foundation of religion; "yet does it not plainly destroy the proof that he is of that character, and consequently the proof of religion?" By no means. For we find that happiness and

[5] By *will* and *character* is meant that which, in speaking of men, we should express, not only by these words, but also by the words *temper, taste, dispositions, practical principles, that whole frame of mind, from whence we act in one manner rather than another.*

misery are not our fate, in any such sense as not to be the consequences of our behaviour, but that they are the consequences of it.[6] We find God exercises the same kind of government over us, with that which a father exercises over his children, and a civil magistrate over his subjects. Now, whatever becomes of abstract questions concerning liberty and necessity, it evidently appears to us that veracity and justice must be the natural rule and measure of exercising this authority or government, to a Being who can have no competitions or interfering of interests with his creatures and his subjects.

But as the doctrine of liberty, though we experience its truth, may be perplexed with difficulties, which run up into the most abstruse of all speculations, and as the opinion of necessity seems to be the very basis upon which infidelity grounds itself, it may be of some use to offer a more particular proof of the obligations of religion, which may distinctly be shown not to be destroyed by this opinion.

The proof from final causes of an intelligent Author of Nature is not affected by the opinion of necessity; supposing necessity a thing possible in itself, and reconcilable with the constitution of things.[7] And it is a matter of fact, independent on this or any other speculation, that he governs the world by the method of rewards and punishments;[8] and also that he hath given us a moral faculty, by which we distinguish between actions, and approve some as virtuous and of good desert, and disapprove others as vicious and of ill desert.[9] Now this moral discernment implies, in the notion of it, a rule of action, and a rule of a very peculiar kind; for it carries in it authority and a right of direction; authority in such a sense, as that we cannot depart from it without being self-condemned.[10] And that the dictates of this moral faculty, which are by nature a rule to us, are moreover the laws of God, laws in a sense including sanctions, may be thus proved. Consciousness of a rule or guide of action, in creatures who are capable of considering it as given them by their Maker, not only raises immediately a sense of duty, but also a sense of security in following it, and of danger in

[6] Chap. ii. [7] P. 114, etc. [8] Chap. ii. [9] Dissert. II.
[10] Serm. II. at the Rolls.

deviating from it. A direction of the Author of Nature, given to creatures capable of looking upon it as such, is plainly a command from him; and a command from him necessarily includes in it, at least, an implicit promise in case of obedience, or threatening in case of disobedience. But then the sense or perception of good and ill desert,[11] which is contained in the moral discernment, renders the sanction explicit, and makes it appear, as one may say, expressed. For since his method of government is to reward and punish actions, his having annexed to some actions an inseparable sense of good desert, and to others of ill, this surely amounts to declaring upon whom his punishments shall be inflicted, and his rewards be bestowed. For he must have given us this discernment and sense of things, as a presentiment of what is to be hereafter; that is, by way of information beforehand, what we are finally to expect in this world. There is then most evident ground to think that the government of God, upon the whole, will be found to correspond to the nature which he has given us; and that in the upshot and issue of things, happiness and misery shall, in fact and event, be made to follow virtue and vice respectively; as he has already, in so peculiar a manner, associated the ideas of them in our minds. And from hence might easily be deduced the obligations of religious worship, were it only to be considered as a means of preserving upon our minds a sense of this moral government of God, and securing our obedience to it; which yet is an extremely imperfect view of that most important duty.

Now I say, no objection from necessity can lie against this general proof of religion. None against the proposition reasoned upon, that we have such a moral faculty and discernment; because this is a mere matter of fact, a thing of experience, that human kind is thus constituted; none against the conclusion, because it is immediate and wholly from this fact. For the conclusion, that God will finally reward the righteous and punish the wicked, is not here drawn, from its appearing to us fit[12] that *he should*; but from

[11] Dissert. II.

[12] However, I am far from intending to deny that the will of God is determined by what is fit, by the right and reason of the case

its appearing, that he has told us, *he will*. And this he hath certainly told us, in the promise and threatening which it hath been observed the notion of a command implies, and the sense of good and ill desert which he has given us more distinctly expresses. And this reasoning from fact is confirmed, and in some degree even verified, by other facts, by the natural tendencies of virtue and of vice;[13] and by this, that God, in the natural course of his providence, punishes vicious actions as mischievous to society, and also vicious actions as such in the strictest sense.[14] So that the general proof of religion is unanswerably real, even upon the wild supposition which we are arguing upon.

It must likewise be observed further, that natural religion hath, besides this, an external evidence; which the doctrine of necessity, if it could be true, would not affect. For suppose a person by the observations and reasoning above, or by any other, convinced of the truth of religion, that there

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though one chooses to decline matters of such abstract speculation, and to speak with caution when one does speak of them. But if it be intelligible to say, that *it is fit and reasonable for every one to consult his own happiness*, then *fitness of action, or the right and reason of the case*, is an intelligible manner of speaking. And it seems as inconceivable to suppose God to approve one course of action, or one end, preferably to another, which yet his acting at all from design implies that he does, without supposing somewhat prior in that end to be the ground of the preference; as to suppose him to discern an abstract proposition to be true, without supposing somewhat prior in it, to be the ground of the discernment. It doth not therefore appear that moral right is any more relative to perception than abstract truth is; or that it is any more improper to speak of the fitness and rightness of actions and ends, as founded in the nature of things, than to speak of abstract truth as thus founded. [It will be marked that Butler rests his argument throughout, not on what is abstractedly fit, nor even on man's nature, but on admitted facts. In Part II., ch. vii., he gives reasons for this course. Here, however, he intimates his agreement with Cudworth and Clarke on the intrinsic fitness (or excellence) of morality, as in his Sermons on Human Nature he maintains its naturalness.]

[13] Pp. 66 74. [14] P. 53, etc.

is a God who made the world, who is the moral governor and judge of mankind, and will upon the whole deal with every one according to his works; I say, suppose a person convinced of this by reason, but to know nothing at all of antiquity or the present state of mankind; it would be natural for such an one to be inquisitive, what was the history of this system of doctrine; at what time, and in what manner it came first into the world; and whether it were believed by any considerable part of it. And were he upon inquiry to find that a particular person, in a late age, first of all proposed it as a deduction of reason, and that mankind were before wholly ignorant of it; then, though its evidence from reason would remain, there would be no additional probability of its truth from the account of its discovery. But instead of this being the fact of the case, on the contrary he
a would find, what could not but afford him a very strong confirmation of its truth: First, that somewhat of this system with more or fewer additions and alterations, hath been professed in all ages and countries, of which we have any certain
b information relating to this matter. Secondly, that it is certain historical fact, so far as we can trace things up, that this whole system of belief that there is one God, the Creator and moral Governor of the world, and that mankind is in a state of religion, was received in the first ages. And thirdly, that
c as there is no hint or intimation in history that this system was first reasoned out, so there is express historical or traditional evidence, as ancient as history, that it was taught first by revelation. Now these things must be allowed to
(a) be of great weight. The first of them, general consent, shows this system to be conformable to the common sense of mankind. The second, namely, that religion was believed in the first ages of the world, especially as it does not appear that there were then any superstitious or false additions to it, cannot but be further confirmation of its truth. For it is a proof of this alternative; either that it came into the world by revelation, or that it is natural, obvious, and forces itself
(b) upon the mind. The former of these is the conclusion of learned men. And whoever will consider how unapt for speculation rude and uncultivated minds are, will perhaps from hence alone be strongly inclined to believe it the truth.

And as it is shown in the Second Part[15] of this Treatise, that there is nothing of such peculiar presumption against a revelation in the beginning of the world, as there is supposed to be against subsequent ones: a sceptic could not, I think, give any account, which would appear more probable even to himself, of the early pretences to revelation, than by supposing some real original one from whence they were copied. And the third thing above mentioned, that there is express (c) historical or traditional evidence, as ancient as history, of the system of religion being taught mankind by revelation, this must be admitted as some degree of real proof that it was so taught. For why should not the most ancient tradition be admitted, as some additional proof of a fact, against which there is no presumption? And this proof is mentioned here, because it has its weight to show that religion came into the world by revelation, prior to all consideration of the proper authority of any book supposed to contain it; and even prior to all consideration, whether the revelation itself be uncorruptly handed down, and related, or mixed and darkened with fables. Thus the historical account, which we have, of the origin of religion, taking in all circumstances, is a real confirmation of its truth, no way affected by the opinion of necessity. And the *external* evidence, even of natural religion, is by no means inconsiderable.

But it is carefully to be observed, and ought to be recollected after all proofs of virtue and religion, which are only general, that as speculative reason may be neglected, prejudiced, and deceived, so also may our moral understanding be impaired and perverted, and the dictates of it not impartially attended to. This indeed proves nothing against the reality of our speculative or practical faculties of perception; against their being intended by Nature to inform us in the theory of things, and instruct us how we are to behave, and what we are to expect in consequence of our behaviour. Yet our liableness, in the degree we are liable, to prejudice and perversion, is a most serious admonition to us to be upon our guard, with respect to what is of such consequence as our determinations concerning virtue and

[15] Chap. ii

religion; and particularly not to take custom and fashion, and slight notions of honour, or imaginations of present ease, use, and convenience to mankind, for the only moral rule.[16]

The foregoing observations, drawn from the nature of the thing, and the history of religion, amount, when taken together, to a real practical proof of it, not to be confuted; such a proof as, considering the infinite importance of the thing, I apprehend, would be admitted fully sufficient in reason to influence the actions of men, who act upon thought and reflection, if it were admitted that there is no proof of the contrary. But it may be said, "There are many probabilities, which cannot indeed be confuted, *i. e.* shown to be no probabilities, and yet may be overbalanced by greater probabilities on the other side, much more by demonstration. And there is no occasion to object against particular arguments alleged for an opinion, when the opinion itself may be clearly shown to be false, without meddling with such arguments at all, but leaving them just as they are.[17] Now the method of government by rewards and punishments, and especially rewarding and punishing good and ill desert as such respectively, must go upon supposition that we are free and not necessary agents. And it is incredible that the Author of Nature should govern us upon a supposition as true, which he knows to be false, and therefore absurd to think he will reward or punish us for our actions hereafter; especially that he will do it under the notion, that they are of good or ill desert." Here then the matter is brought to a point. And the answer to all this is full, and not to be evaded; that the whole constitution and course of things, the whole analogy of Providence, shows beyond possibility of doubt that the conclusion from this reasoning is false, wherever the fallacy lies. The doctrine of freedom indeed clearly shows where; in supposing ourselves necessary, when in truth we are free agents. But upon the supposition of necessity, the fallacy lies in taking for granted that it is incredible necessary agents should be rewarded and punished. But that, some how or other, the conclusion now mentioned is false, is most certain. For it is fact that God does govern

[16] Dissert. II. [17] Pp. 11, 12.

even brute creatures by the method of rewards and punishments, in the natural course of things. And men are rewarded and punished for their actions, punished for actions mischievous to society as being so, punished for vicious actions as such, by the natural instrumentality of each other, under the present conduct of Providence. Nay even the affection of gratitude, and the passion of resentment, and the rewards and punishments following from them, which in general are to be considered as natural, *i. e.* from the Author of Nature; these rewards and punishments, being naturally[18] annexed to actions considered as implying good intention and good desert, ill intention and ill desert; these natural rewards and punishments, I say, are as much a contradiction to the conclusion above, and show its falsehood, as a more exact and complete rewarding and punishing of good and ill desert as such. So that if it be incredible that necessary agents should be thus rewarded and punished, then men are not necessary but free; since it is matter of fact, that they are thus rewarded and punished. But if, on the contrary, which is the supposition we have been arguing upon, it be insisted that men are necessary agents, then there is nothing incredible in the further supposition of necessary agents being thus rewarded and punished; since we ourselves are thus dealt with.

From the whole therefore it must follow, that a necessity supposed possible, and reconcilable with the constitution of things, does in no sort prove that the Author of Nature will not, nor destroy the proof that he will, finally and upon the whole, in his eternal government, render his creatures happy or miserable, by some means or other, as they behave well or ill. Or, to express this conclusion in words conformable to the title of the chapter, the analogy of Nature shows us, that the opinion of necessity, considered as practical, is

[18] Sermon VIII at the Rolls, [on Resentment. "Why should man dispute concerning the reality of virtue, and whether it be founded on the nature of things (which yet surely is not matter of question), when every man carries about him this passion, which affords him demonstration that the rules of justice and equity are to be the guide of his actions? For every man naturally feels an indignation upon seeing instances of villany and baseness, and, therefore, cannot commit the same without being self-condemned."]

false. And if necessity, upon the supposition above mentioned, doth not destroy the proof of natural religion, it evidently makes no alteration in the proof of revealed.

2 From these things likewise we may learn, in what sense to understand that general assertion, that the opinion of necessity is essentially destructive of all religion. First, in a practical sense; that by this notion, atheistical men pretend to satisfy and encourage themselves in vice, and justify to others their disregard to all religion. And secondly, in the strictest sense, that it is a contradiction to the whole constitution of Nature, and to what we may every moment experience in ourselves, and so overturns everything.[19] But by no means is this assertion to be understood, as if necessity, supposing it could possibly be reconciled with the constitution of things and with what we experience, were not also reconcilable with religion: for upon this supposition, it demonstrably is so.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE GOVERNMENT OF GOD, CONSIDERED AS A SCHEME OR CONSTITUTION, IMPERFECTLY COMPREHENDED.[1]

[Objections against the *fact* of moral government have been considered. There are others against its moral character: Is it wise and good, and can objections to its wisdom and goodness (founded on the existence of evil) be answered? They may *indirectly*, thus:

A God's moral and natural government are so analogous, that it is credible his moral government is like his natural government,

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[19] [See note [1] of this Chapter. Necessity—in the sense that men act from compulsion—is against Nature and experience: Necessity—in the sense that men's acts are foreseen, and so certain; or even in the sense that men's acts are the results of influences and causes (including natural dispositions and Divine grace)—is not. "Necessity, rightly understood, instead of laying an arrest on the powers and purposes of man, or in any way destroying his spontaneity, leaves him as busy and painstaking a creature as before."—Chalmers' Lect., p. 40.]

[1] [The subject of this chapter is a favourite one with many eminent writers; and Butler himself (Sermon xv.) has stated it at large. Leibnitz has repeatedly enforced the same argument, as has Addison in the 'Spectator.'

an incomprehensible scheme. And this general fact may answer particular objections. Note the fact itself, 1, 2:

1 God's natural government is an incomprehensible scheme.

a A scheme, 1, with parts and correspondences; 2, relations between different events and actions throughout all space; and, 3, through all time.

b An incomprehensible scheme; so that we can, 1, give no account of things in all their connexions; nor can we, 2, say that anything, however insignificant, is not a necessary condition of something most important.

2 God's moral government is also an incomprehensible scheme;

a A scheme, as appears from

1 The connexion between the two governments;

2 The subservience of the natural to the moral; and,

3 The analogy between the two.

b And so incomprehensible. Hence no objections against parts of this scheme can be insisted upon by reasonable men.

3 Our ignorance (though often overlooked) is a satisfactory answer to objections against the wisdom and goodness of the whole arrangement, as will further appear

a From the weakness of the assertions on which the objections rest: 'in some way (by repeated interpositions, or by making all acts single and unrelated), things might be better:'—which is saying but little; and is, after all, only arbitrary assertion without proof.

b From the nature of our ignorance, which includes the very related parts to which existing works belong. Did we *see* the related parts, our objections might at once cease.

"It is to be considered that Providence, in its economy, regards the whole system of time and things together, so that we cannot discover the beautiful connexions between incidents which be widely separated in time, and, by losing so many links of the chain, our reasonings become broken and imperfect. Thus, those parts of the moral world which have not an absolute may yet have a relative beauty, in respect of some other parts concealed from us, but open to his eye, before whom 'past,' 'present,' and 'to come,' are set together in one point of view; and those events, the permission of which seems now to accuse his goodness, may, in the consummation of things, both magnify his goodness and exalt his wisdom. And this is enough to check our presumption, since it is vain to apply our measures of regularity to matters of which we know neither the antecedents nor the consequents, the beginning nor the end." Spect. No. 237.]

B Some particular analogies between the two governments further show the weakness of these objections.

1 In both, means are connected with ends; and,

a In natural government undesirable means are connected with desirable ends; and so,

b May it be in moral government.

Obj. And though an absurd conclusion is thence derived that evil is better than good, yet this may be answered; for to permit evil may be better than forcibly to prevent it; yet the non-commission of it may be better still, as health is better than disease, and yet some diseases are remedies for others which are worse.

2 In both, government is carried on by general laws.

a God's natural government is; and those laws are wisest, because general, though not preventing (so far as we at present see) great irregularity.

Obj. 1 It may be said that this irregularity might be prevented by direct interposition; but such interposition would have other and bad effects (in promoting negligence, for example).

2 And if it be said that these bad effects might be prevented by further interposition, this is mere random talk.

b So God's moral government may be: the general laws wise and good, but admitting of irregularity, and forbidding interposition.

C Obj. To the whole of this argument. We must judge of God's government from what we know, not from what we do not know. At any rate such answers (founded on ignorance), to objections against God's government are answers to the proofs of it. To which, reply

1 *Total* ignorance precludes both objections and proof; but partial does not. We may know, for example, the character of an agent, and the ends he will pursue, but not the means he will use. So here we have distinct proofs of God's character and of his ends: how best to attain those ends we may not know.

2 Even if our ignorance invalidated the proofs of God's moral government, moral obligations would remain, because

They rise from our nature, which we cannot neglect without self-condemnation; and, as the possibility of moral government is established, prudence leads us to obey them.

° What answers objections against God's moral government—our ignorance—does not invalidate the proofs of that government.

4 The answers above given are founded not upon our ignorance, however, but upon our incompetency through ignorance; a very different thing. Our incompetency is taught by experience, and is really knowledge.

Though it be, as it cannot but be, acknowledged, that the analogy of Nature gives a strong credibility to the general doctrine of religion, and to the several particular things contained in it, considered as so many matters of fact; and likewise that it shows this credibility not to be destroyed by any notions of necessity: yet still, objections may be insisted upon, against the wisdom, equity, and goodness of the Divine government implied in the notion of religion, and against the method by which this government is conducted; to which objections analogy can be no direct answer. For the credibility, or the certain truth, of a matter of fact, does not immediately prove anything concerning the wisdom or goodness of it: and analogy can do no more, immediately or directly, than show such and such things to be true or credible, considered only as matters of fact. But still, if, upon supposition of a moral constitution of Nature and a moral government over it, analogy suggests and makes it credible, that this government must be a scheme, system, or constitution of government, as distinguished from a number of single unconnected acts of distributive justice and goodness; and likewise, that it must be a scheme, so imperfectly comprehended, and of such a sort in other respects, as to afford a direct general answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of it: then analogy is, remotely, of great service in answering those objections, both by suggesting the answer, and showing it to be a credible one.

Now this, upon inquiry, will be found to be the case. For, first, Upon supposition that God exercises a moral government over the world, the analogy of his natural government suggests and makes it credible, that his moral government must be a scheme, quite beyond our comprehension: and this affords a general answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of it. And, secondly, A more distinct observation of some particular things contained in God's

scheme of natural government, the like things being supposed, by analogy, to be contained in his moral government, will further show, how little weight is to be laid upon these objections.

I. Upon supposition that God exercises a moral government over the world, the analogy of his natural government suggests and makes it credible, that his moral government must be a scheme, quite beyond our comprehension; and this affords a general answer to all objections against the justice and goodness of it. It is most obvious, analogy renders it highly credible, that, upon supposition of a moral government, it must be a scheme: for the world, and the whole natural government of it, appears to be so: to be a scheme, system, or constitution, whose parts correspond to each other, and to a whole; as really as any work of art, or as any particular model of a civil constitution and government. In this great scheme of the natural world, individuals have various peculiar relations to other individuals of their own species. And whole species are, we find, variously related to other species upon this earth. Nor do we know, how much further these kinds of relations may extend. And, as there is not any action or natural event, which we are acquainted with, so single and unconnected, as not to have a respect to some other actions and events: so possibly each of them, when it has not an immediate, may yet have a remote, natural relation to other actions and events, much beyond the compass of this present world. There seems indeed nothing, from whence we can so much as make a conjecture, whether all creatures, actions, and events, throughout the whole of Nature, have relations to each other. But, as it is obvious, that all events have future unknown consequences; so if we trace any, as far as we can go, into what is connected with it, we shall find, that if such event were not connected with somewhat further in Nature unknown to us, somewhat both past and present, such event could not possibly have been at all. Nor can we give the whole account of any one thing whatever; of all its causes, ends, and necessary adjuncts; those adjuncts, I mean, without which it could not have been. By this most astonishing connexion, these reciprocal correspondences and mutual relations, every thing which we see in the course of Nature is actually brought

about. And things seemingly the most insignificant imaginable are perpetually observed to be necessary conditions to other things of the greatest importance: so that any one thing whatever may, for aught we know to the contrary, be a necessary condition to any other.[2] The natural world then, and natural government of it, being such an incomprehensible scheme; so incomprehensible, that a man must, really in the literal sense, know nothing at all, who is not sensible of his ignorance in it; this immediately suggests, and strongly shows the credibility, that the moral world and government of it may be so too. Indeed the natural and moral constitution and government of the world are so connected, as to make up together but one scheme: and it is highly probable, that the first is formed and carried on merely in subserviency to the latter; as the vegetable world is for the animal, and organized bodies for minds. But the thing intended here is, without inquiring how far the administration of the natural world is subordinate to that of the moral, only to observe the credibility, that one should be analogous or similar to the other: that therefore every act of Divine justice and goodness may be supposed to look much beyond itself, and its immediate object; may have some reference to other parts of God's moral administration, and to a general moral plan; and that every circumstance of this his moral government may be adjusted beforehand with a view to the whole of it. Thus for example: the determined length of time, and the degrees and ways, in which virtue is to remain in a state of warfare and discipline, and in which wickedness is permitted to have its progress; the times appointed for the execution of justice; the appointed instruments of it; the kinds of rewards and punishments, and the manners of their distribution; all particular instances of Divine justice and goodness, and every circumstance of them, may have such respects to each other, as to make up altogether a whole; connected and related in all its parts; a scheme or system, which is as properly one as the natural world is, and of the like kind.

[2] [It is curious to find Butler adopting the very thoughts and phraseology of the Necessitarians. "There is hardly any one action (says Hobbes) how casual soever it seems, to the causing whereof concurs not whatsoever is *in rerum naturâ*."]

And supposing this to be the case, it is most evident, that we are not competent judges of this scheme, from the small parts of it which come within our view in the present life: and therefore no objections against any of these parts can be insisted upon by reasonable men.

3 This our ignorance, and the consequence here drawn from it, are universally acknowledged upon other occasions; and though scarce denied, yet are universally forgot, when persons come to argue against religion. And it is not perhaps easy, even for the most reasonable men, always to bear in mind the degree of our ignorance, and make due allowances for it. Upon these accounts, it may not be useless to go on a little further, in order to show more distinctly, how just an answer our ignorance is, to objections against the scheme of Providence. Suppose then a person boldly to assert, that the things complained of, the origin and continuance of evil, might easily have been prevented by repeated interpositions;[3] interpositions so guarded and circumstanced, as would preclude all mischief arising from them; or, if this were impracticable, that a *scheme* of government is itself an imperfection; since more good might have been produced, without any scheme, system, or constitution at all, by continued single unrelated acts of distributive justice and goodness; because these would have occasioned no irregularities. And further than this, it is presumed, the objections will not be carried. Yet the answer is obvious, that were these assertions true, still the observations above, concerning our ignorance in the scheme of Divine government, and the consequence drawn from it, would hold, in great measure, enough to vindicate religion, against all objections from the disorders of the present state. Were these assertions true, yet the government of the world might be just and good notwithstanding; for, at the most, they would infer nothing more than that it might have been better. But indeed they are mere arbitrary assertions, no man being sufficiently acquainted with the possibilities of things, to bring any proof of them to the lowest degree of probability. For however possible what is asserted may seem, yet many instances may be alleged, in things much less out of our reach of suppositions absolutely impossible,

[3] Pp. 137, 138, etc.

and reducible to the most palpable self-contradictions, which
not every one by any means would perceive to be such, nor
perhaps any one at first sight suspect. From these things, b
it is easy to see distinctly, how our ignorance, as it is the
common, is really a satisfactory answer to all objections
against the justice and goodness of Providence. If a man,
contemplating any one providential dispensation, which had
no relation to any others, should object, that he discerned in
it a disregard to justice, or a deficiency of goodness; nothing
would be less an answer to such objection, than our ignor-
ance in other parts of Providence, or in the possibilities of
things, no way related to what he was contemplating. But
when we know not but the parts objected against may be
relative to other parts unknown to us; and when we are
unacquainted with what is, in the nature of the thing prac-
ticable in the case before us, then our ignorance is a satis-
factory answer; because, some unknown relation, or some
unknown impossibility, may render what is objected against,
just and good; nay good in the highest practicable degree.

II. And how little weight is to be laid upon such objec- B
tions, will further appear, by a more distinct observation of
some particular things contained in the natural government
of God, the like to which may be supposed, from analogy, to
be contained in his moral government.

First, As in the scheme of the natural world, no ends ap- 1
pear to be accomplished without means; so we find that a
means very undesirable, often conduce to bring about ends
in such a measure desirable, as greatly to overbalance the
disagreeableness of the means. And in cases where such
means are conducive to such ends, it is not reason, but ex-
perience, which shows us, that they are thus conducive.
Experience also shows many means to be conducive and
necessary to accomplish ends, which means before experience,
we should have thought, would have had even a contrary
tendency. Now from these observations relating to the
natural scheme of the world, the moral being supposed ana-
logous to it, arises a great credibility, that the putting our
misery in each other's power to the degree it is, and making
men liable to vice to the degree we are; and in general, that
those things which are objected against the moral scheme of
Providence, may be, upon the whole, friendly and assistant

to virtue, and productive of an overbalance of happiness *i. e.*, the things objected against may be means, by which an overbalance of good will, in the end, be found produced. And from the same observations, it appears to be no presumption against this, that we do not, if indeed we do not, see those means to have any such tendency; or that they seem to us to have a contrary one. Thus those things, which we call irregularities, may not be so at all, because they may be means of accomplishing wise and good ends more considerable. And it may be added as above,[4] that they may also be the only means, by which these wise and good ends are capable of being accomplished.

Obj. After these observations it may be proper to add, in order to obviate an absurd and wicked conclusion from any of them, that though the constitution of our nature, from whence we are capable of vice and misery, may, as it undoubtedly does, contribute to the perfection and happiness of the world; and though the actual permission of evil may be beneficial to it: (*i. e.*, it would have been more mischievous, not that a wicked person had himself abstained from his own wickedness, but that any one had forcibly prevented it, than that it was permitted:) yet notwithstanding, it might have been much better for the world, if this very evil had never been done. Nay, it is most clearly conceivable, that the very commission of wickedness may be beneficial to the world, and yet, that it would be infinitely more beneficial for men to refrain from it. For thus, in the wise and good constitution of the natural world, there are disorders which bring their own cures; diseases, which are themselves remedies. Many a man would have died, had it not been for the gout or a fever; yet it would be thought madness to assert, that sickness is a better or more perfect state than health · though the like, with regard to the moral world, has been asserted.[5] But,

[4] Pp. 134, 135.

[5] [By Leibnitz, and even by Edwards.—Essay, § ix.

The reasoning in the early part of this paragraph, though sanctioned by Dr. King, is hardly just: a fever may be better than death, though health is better than either; so the permission of sin is better than the forcible prevention of it, though perfect holiness is better than either. If the question be, why God, having

Secondly, The natural government of the world is carried on by general laws. For this there may be wise and good reasons: the wisest and best, for aught we know to the contrary And that there are such reasons, is suggested to our thoughts by the analogy of Nature: by our being made to experience good ends to be accomplished, as indeed all the good which we enjoy is accomplished by this means, that the laws, by which the world is governed, are general. For we have scarce any kind of enjoyments, but what we are, in some way or other, instrumental in procuring ourselves, by acting in a manner which we foresee likely to procure them: now this foresight could not be at all, were not the government of the world carried on by general laws. And though, for aught we know to the contrary, every single case may be, at length, found to have been provided for even by these: yet to prevent all irregularities, or remedy them as they arise, by the wisest and best general laws, may be impossible in the nature of things; as we see it is absolutely impossible in civil government. But then we are ready to think, that, the constitution of Nature remaining as it is, and the course of things being permitted to go on, in other respects, as it does, there might be interpositions to prevent irregularities, though they could not have been prevented or remedied by any general laws. And there would indeed be reason to wish, which, by the way, is very different from a right to claim, that all irregularities were prevented or remedied by present interpositions, if these interpositions would have no other effect than this. But it is plain they would have some visible and immediate bad effects: for instance, they would encourage idleness and negligence; and they would render doubtful the natural rule of life, which is ascertained by this very thing, that the course of the world is carried on by general laws.

made man liable to sin, does not forcibly prevent his sinning, the answer here given is pertinent; but the question is really, why man is not created without any inclinations that can lead him to sin, or without external causes which may become favourable to it: a question we cannot answer, except by saying, that the reason is no want on God's part either of holiness or of love. See Whately's Appendix to King's Discourse on Predestination, or Lord Brougham's notes to Paley's Nat. Theol., vol. v. p. 41.]

And further, it is certain they would have distant effects, and very great ones too; by means of the wonderful connexions before mentioned.[6] So that we cannot so much as guess, what would be the whole result of the interpositions desired. It may be said, any bad result might be prevented by further
a interpositions, whenever there was occasion for them: but this again is talking quite at random, and in the dark.[7] Upon the whole then, we see wise reasons, why the course of the world should be carried on by general laws, and good ends accomplished by this means: and, for aught we know, there may be the wisest reasons for it, and the best ends accomplished by it. We have no ground to believe, that all irregularities could be remedied as they arise, or could have been precluded by general laws. We find that interpositions would produce evil, and prevent good: and, for aught we know, they would produce greater evil than they would prevent; and prevent greater good than they would produce.
b And if this be the case, then the not interposing is so far from being a ground of complaint, that it is an instance of goodness. This is intelligible and sufficient: and going further, seems beyond the utmost reach of our faculties.

c **Obj.** But it may be said, that "after all, these supposed impossibilities and relations are what we are unacquainted with; and we must judge of religion, as of other things, by what we do know, and look upon the rest as nothing: or however, that the answers here given to what is objected against religion, may equally be made use of to invalidate the proof of it; since their stress lies so very much upon our ignorance." But,

1 **First, though total ignorance in any matter does indeed equally destroy, or rather preclude, all proof concerning it, and objections against it; yet partial ignorance does not. For we may in any degree be convinced, that a person is of such a character, and consequently will pursue such ends; though we are greatly ignorant, what is the proper way of acting, in order the most effectually to obtain those ends: and in this case, objections against his manner of acting, as seemingly not conducive to obtain them, might be answered by our ignorance; though the proof that such ends were intended, might not at all be invalidated by it. Thus, the**

[6] P. 132, etc   [7] P. 132

proof of religion is a proof of the moral character of God, and consequently that his government is moral, and that every one upon the whole shall receive according to his deserts; a proof that this is the designed end of his government. But we are not competent judges, what is the proper way of acting, in order the most effectually to accomplish this end.[8] Therefore our ignorance is an answer to objections against the conduct of Providence, in permitting irregularities, as seeming contradictory to this end. Now, since it is so obvious, that our ignorance may be a satisfactory answer to objections against a thing, and yet not affect the proof of it; till it can be shown it is frivolous to assert, that our ignorance invalidates the proof of religion, as it does the objections against it.

Secondly, Suppose unknown impossibilities, and unknown relations, might justly be urged to invalidate the proof of religion, as well as to answer objections against it: and that, in consequence of this, the proof of it were doubtful. Yet still, let the assertion be despised, or let it be ridiculed, it is undeniably true, that moral obligations would remain certain though it were not certain what would, upon the whole, be the consequence of observing or violating them. For, these obligations arise immediately and necessarily from the judgment of our own mind, unless perverted, which we cannot violate without being self-condemned. And they would be certain too, from considerations of interest. For though it were doubtful, what will be the future consequences of virtue and vice; yet it is, however, credible, that they may have those consequences, which religion teaches us they will: and this credibility is a certain[9] obligation in point of prudence, to abstain from all wickedness, and to live in the conscientious practice of all that is good. But, 2

Thirdly, The answers above given to the objections against religion cannot equally be made use of to invalidate the proof of it. For, upon supposition that God exercises a moral government over the world, analogy does most strongly lead us to conclude, that this moral government must be a scheme, or constitution, beyond our comprehension. And a thousand particular analogies show us, that parts of such a scheme, from their relation to other parts, may con- 3

[8] Pp. 10, 11. [9] P. 6; and Part ii. ch. vi.

duce to accomplish ends, which we should have thought they had no tendency at all to accomplish: nay ends, which, before experience, we should have thought such parts were contradictory to, and had a tendency to prevent. And therefore all these analogies show, that the way of arguing made use of in objecting against religion is delusive: because they show it is not at all incredible, that, could we comprehend the whole, we should find the permission of the disorders objected against to be consistent with justice and goodness; and even to be instances of them. Now this is not applicable to the proof of religion, as it is to the objections against it;[10] and therefore cannot invalidate that proof, as it does these objections.

4 Lastly, From the observation now made, it is easy to see, that the answers above given to the objections against providence, though, in a general way of speaking, they may be said to be taken from our ignorance; yet are by no means taken merely from that, but from somewhat which analogy shows us concerning it. For analogy shows us positively, that our ignorance in the possibilities of things, and the various relations in Nature, renders us incompetent judges, and leads us to false conclusions, in cases similar to this, in which we pretend to judge and to object. So that the things above insisted upon are not mere suppositions of unknown impossibilities and relations, but they are suggested to our thoughts, and even forced upon the observation of serious men, and rendered credible too, by the analogy of Nature. And therefore, to take these things into the account, is to judge by experience and what we do know: and it is not judging so, to take no notice of them.[11]

[10] Serm. at the Rolls, p. 312, 2nd Ed. [Sermon upon the Ignorance of Man.]

[11] [The reader may find a number of "philosophical testimonies to the limitation of our knowledge, from the limitation of our faculties," in Sir W. Hamilton's 'Discussions on Philosophy, p. 601. "The recognition of human ignorance is not only the one highest, but the one true, knowledge; and its first fruit, as has been said, is humility. Simple nescience is not proud. Consummated science is positively humble. . . . There are two sorts of ignorance: we philosophise to escape ignorance, and the consummation of our philosophy is ignorance: we start from the one, we repose in the other." . . . .]

CONCLUSION.

ɛ observations of the last chapter lead us to consider this le scene of human life in which we are so busily engaged, having a reference of some sort or other to a much larger n of things. Whether we are any way related to the re distant parts of the boundless universe, into which we brought, is altogether uncertain. But it is evident, that course of things which comes within our view, is con- ted with somewhat past, present, and future, beyond it.[1] that we are placed, as one may speak, in the middle of a eme, not a fixed but a progressive one, every way incom- hensible; incomprehensible in a manner equally with pect to what has been, what now is, and what shall be reafter. And this scheme cannot but contain in it some- at as wonderful, and as much beyond our thought and nception[2] as anything in that of religion. For, will any man his senses say, that it is less difficult to conceive how the rld came to be and to continue as it is, without than with intelligent Author and Governor of it? or admitting an elligent Governor of it, that there is some other rule of vernment more natural, and of easier conception than that ich we call moral? Indeed, without an intelligent Author d Governor of Nature, no account at all can be given, how is universe, or the part of it particularly in which we are ncerned, came to be, and the course of it to be carried on, it is; nor any of its general end and design without a oral Governor of it. That there is an intelligent Author Nature and natural Governor of the world, is a principle ne upon in the foregoing treatise, as proved and generally own and confessed to be proved. And the very notion of intelligent Author of Nature, proved by particular final uses, implies a will and a character. Now, as our whole ture, the nature which he has given us, leads us to con- ude his will and character to be moral, just, and good; we can scarce in imagination conceive what it can be

[1] P. 132, etc. [2] See Part ii. chap. ii.

otherwise. However, in consequence of this his will and character, whatever it be, he formed the universe as it is, and carries on the course of it as he does, rather than in any other manner, and has assigned to us and to all living creatures a part and a lot in it. Irrational creatures act this their part, and enjoy and undergo the pleasures and the pains allotted them without any reflection. But one would think it impossible that creatures endued with reason could avoid reflecting sometimes upon all this; reflecting, if not from whence we came, yet at least whither we are going, and what the mysterious scheme, in the midst of which we find ourselves, will at length come out and produce; a scheme in which it is certain we are highly interested, and in which we may be interested even beyond conception. For many things prove it palpably absurd to conclude that we shall cease to be at death. Particular analogies do most sensibly show us that there is nothing to be thought strange in our being to exist in another state of life. And that we are now living beings affords a strong probability that we shall *continue* so; unless there be some positive ground, and there is none from reason or analogy, to think death will destroy us. Were a persuasion of this kind ever so well grounded, there would surely be little reason to take pleasure in it. But indeed it can have no other ground, than some such imagination as that of our gross bodies being ourselves, which is contrary to experience. Experience too most clearly shows us the folly of concluding from the body and the living agent affecting each other mutually, that the dissolution of the former is the destruction of the latter. And there are remarkable instances of their not affecting each other, which lead us to a contrary conclusion. The supposition then, which in all reason we are to go upon, is that our living nature will *continue* after death. And it is infinitely unreasonable to form an institution of life, or to act upon any other supposition. Now all expectation of immortality, whether more or less certain, opens an unbounded prospect to our hopes and our fears; since we see the constitution of Nature is such as to admit of misery, as well as to be productive of happiness, and experience ourselves to partake of both in some degree; and since we cannot but know, what higher degrees of both we are capable

of. And there is no presumption against believing further, that our future interest depends upon our present behaviour; for we see our present interest doth, and that the happiness and misery, which are naturally annexed to our actions, very frequently do not follow till long after the actions are done, to which they are respectively annexed. So that were speculation to leave us uncertain, whether it were likely that the Author of Nature, in giving happiness and misery to his creatures hath regard to their actions or not; yet since we find by experience that he hath such regard, the whole sense of things which he has given us plainly leads us at once and without any elaborate inquiries, to think that it may, indeed must, be to good actions chiefly that he hath annexed happiness and to bad actions misery; or that he will upon the whole, reward those who do well and punish those who do evil. To confirm this from the constitution of the world, it has been observed that some sort of moral government is necessarily implied in that natural government of God, which we experience ourselves under; that good and bad actions at present are naturally rewarded and punished, not only as beneficial and mischievous to society, but also as virtuous and vicious; and that there is in the very nature of the thing a tendency to their being rewarded and punished in a much higher degree than they are at present. And though this higher degree of distributive justice, which nature thus points out and leads towards, is prevented for a time from taking place; it is by obstacles which the state of this world unhappily throws in its way, and which therefore are in their nature temporary. Now as these things in the natural conduct of Providence are observable on the side of virtue, so there is nothing to be set against them on the side of vice. A moral scheme of government then is visibly established, and in some degree carried into execution; and this, together with the essential tendencies of virtue and vice duly considered, naturally raise in us an apprehension that it will be carried on farther towards perfection in a future state, and that every one shall there receive according to his deserts. And if this be so, then our future and general interest, under the moral government of God, is appointed to depend upon our behaviour, notwithstanding the difficulty which this may occasion of securing it and the

Chap 2

Chap 3

Chap 4

danger of losing it; just in the same manner as our temporal interest under his natural government is appointed to depend upon our behaviour, notwithstanding the like difficulty and danger. For, from our original constitution and that of the world which we inhabit, we are naturally trusted with ourselves, with our own conduct and our own interest. And from the same constitution of nature, especially joined with that course of things which is owing to men, we have temptations to be unfaithful in this trust; to forfeit this interest, to neglect it, and run ourselves into misery and ruin. From these temptations arise the difficulties of behaving so as to secure our temporal interest, and the hazard of behaving so as to miscarry in it. There is, therefore, nothing incredible in supposing there may be the like difficulty and hazard with regard to that chief and final good which religion lays before us. Indeed the whole account, how it came to pass that we were placed in such a condition as this, must be beyond our comprehension. But it is in part accounted for by what religion teaches us, that the character of virtue and piety must be a necessary qualification for a future state of security and happiness under the moral government of God; in like manner, as some certain qualifications or other are necessary for every particular condition of life under his natural
Chap. 5. government; and that the present state was intended to be a school of discipline, for improving in ourselves that character. Now this intention of nature is rendered highly credible by observing, that we are plainly made for improvement of all kinds; that it is a general appointment of Providence, that we cultivate practical principles, and form within ourselves habits of action, in order to become fit for what we were wholly unfit for before; that in particular, childhood and youth is naturally appointed to be a state of
Chap. 6. discipline for mature age; and that the present world is peculiarly fitted for a state of moral discipline. And whereas objections are urged against the whole notion of moral government and a probation-state, from the opinion of necessity; it has been shown that God has given us the evidence, as it were, of experience, that all objections
Chap. 7. against religion on this head are vain and delusive. He has also in his natural government, suggested an answer to all

our shortsighted objections against the equity and goodness of his moral government; and in general he has exemplified to us the latter by the former.

These things, which, it is to be remembered, are matters of fact, ought, in all common sense, to awaken mankind; to induce them to consider in earnest their condition, and what they have to do. It is absurd, absurd to the degree of being ridiculous, if the subject were not of so serious a kind, for men to think themselves secure in a vicious life, or even in that immoral thoughtlessness which far the greater part of them are fallen into. And the credibility of religion, arising from experience and facts here considered, is fully sufficient in reason to engage them to live in the general practice of all virtue and piety; under the serious apprehension, though it should be mixed with some doubt[3] of a righteous administration established in nature, and a future judgment in consequence of it; especially when we consider how very questionable it is, whether anything at all can be gained by vice;[4] how unquestionably little as well as precarious, the pleasures and profits of it are at the best, and how soon they must be parted with at the longest. For, in the deliberations of reason, concerning what we are to pursue and what to avoid, as temptations to anything from mere passion are supposed out of the case; so inducements to vice, from cool expectations of pleasure and interest so small and uncertain and short, are really so insignificant, as in the view of reason, to be almost nothing in themselves; and in comparison with the importance of religion, they quite disappear and are lost. Mere passion indeed may be alleged, though not as a reason, yet as an excuse, for a vicious course of life. And how sorry an excuse it is, will be manifest by observing that we are placed in a condition in which we are unavoidably inured to govern our passions, by being necessitated to govern them; and to lay ourselves under the same kind of restraints, and as great ones too, from temporal regards, as virtue and piety, in the ordinary course of things, require. The plea of ungovernable passion then, on the side of vice, is the poorest of all things, for it is no reason, and but a poor excuse. But

[3] Part ii. chap. vi. [4] P 56

the proper motives to religion are the proper proofs of it, from our moral nature, from the presages of conscience, and our natural apprehension of God under the character of a righteous Governor and Judge; a nature and conscience and apprehension given us by him; and from the confirmation of the dictates of reason, by *life and immortality brought to light by the gospel; and the wrath of God revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.*

THE END OF THE FIRST PART

THE
ANALOGY OF RELIGION
TO
THE CONSTITUTION AND COURSE OF NATURE.

PART II.
OF REVEALED RELIGION.

CHAPTER I.

OF THE IMPORTANCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

[INTRODUCTION.—To two classes the importance of a revelation is *not* obvious.

a Some *reject* it as incredible or superfluous, and they are answered by the state of the heathen.

b Others neglect it (even when they admit its truth), supposing that it is only the teaching of Nature in another form.

c As a fact, however, God has given it, and it may thence be presumed to be important.

A Christianity may be shown to be important by considering it

1 As a republication of natural religion (God, his government, laws, etc.).

a In its genuine simplicity:

b With authoritativeness—*i. e.*, with new proofs, as miracles and prophecy. These latter *add*

1 To the evidence of natural religion, inasmuch as natural religion is part of revealed, and they confirm both. They also give authoritative or new *proofs*.

2 Though Nature is in a sense a miracle, and so has its own miraculous evidences; yet, practically, the miracles of

Scripture are more authoritative, as is seen in two cases —a teacher working miracles among an ignorant people, and an intelligent inquirer who has learnt all that Nature can teach, and is waiting to have his doubts removed.

c With *new light*, especially on a future state, repentance, etc.,

d With a *visible church*, having positive institutes and public worship; the first,

1 As a form ever reminding men of the reality; and the second,

2 Instructing and reproving them; both tending to perpetuate and diffuse the truth, as may be seen

3 If we compare the state of the world *before* and *since* revelation was given. It may indeed be said,

4 That Christianity in this visible church has been perverted and uninfluential, and so is unimportant. But answer,

(a) Such reasoning sets aside all religion, for natural religion has also been perverted; and

(b) The good effects of Christianity are not small, while its bad effects are not effects of *it* at all.

(c) These effects, moreover, are exaggerated, or are charged to Christianity as a pretence; and

(d) In all dispensations we must judge them by their tendencies if men did their part, and not by their perversion.

e With *express* commands to all Christians to preserve and transmit it.

2 As a revelation of a distinct dispensation; with new truths and duties.

a New truths: redemption by the Son and Spirit; and

b New duties to the Son and the Spirit; which duties spring from our relations to each, as our duty to God springs from our relation to Him; more particularly these duties are all internal or external.

1 *Internal: natural* religion referring to the internal acts or states of the heart in relation to God; *revealed*, to internal acts or states in relation to the Son and the Spirit. These duties arise out of our relations; nor is it important *how* we come to know them (by reason or by revelation): and *external*; expressions, that is, of internal states, according to revealed command: whether as to the Father, the Son, or the Spirit. These duties also arise out of relations; and are many of them

2 Moral; *i. e.*—

(a) The obligations we owe the Son are as moral as the

obligation of charity; they spring out of the nature of the case:

(b) While the violation of them has evil consequences, and is as inexcusable in the case of revelation as in the case of reason, a truth applied to the Son and to the Spirit (c) and (d).

CONCLUSION.

B Note two deductions to illustrate the foregoing and prevent mistakes.

1 Mark the distinction between moral and positive in religion.

a In moral duties we see the reason for them; in positive we do *not*.

b Moral duties arise out of the nature of the case (relations), positive from external command.

c *How* we come to know relations and duties is a question that does nothing in deciding what duties are positive and what moral: external obligations due to God and Christ are positive; though the relation of the Father to us is taught by reason, the relation of the Son, by Scripture, etc.

d Positive institutions (though always fixed by external command) are founded either on natural religion or on revealed.

2 Mark, that from this distinction we gather the ground of the preference given in Scripture to moral over positive duties.

a Carefully note, however, that positive duties, as a whole (though not any particular modes), are morally binding; and the two must not be contrasted further than as they differ.

b If they interfere, fulfil the moral, because,

1 The moral has always a reason in its favour, and

2 It is itself an end, while positive duties are only means.

c Popularly speaking, both are commanded, and so both are binding, yet still the moral are also written in our hearts, and so are to be preferred.

d The question, moreover, is settled for us. The moral is decided to have superior claims—

1 By the nature of the case, which tells us that nothing can be acceptable to God without holiness (moral virtue), and,

2 By Scripture, which lays stress ever on the moral, and tells us of our Lord's declarations (Mat. ix. 13, etc.), which are general and decisive.

e Guard, however, against the mistake of supposing that because positive are *less* important than moral duties, there-

fore they are of *no* importance. Positive Divine commands lay us under a moral obligation to obey them.

C Another deduction or inference (afterwards expanded, chap. iii.) is, that as Christianity is not discoverable by reason, its scheme must be sought *in Scripture;* nor is it an objection to any interpretation of Scripture that it discloses a doctrine or a precept, not contrary to reason and natural religion, but above them, that is neither discoverable through their teaching nor made obligatory by their authority.]

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no. SOME persons, upon pretence of the sufficiency of the light of Nature,[1] avowedly reject all revelation as, in its very
a notion, incredible, and what must be fictitious. And indeed it is certain no revelation would have been given, had the light of Nature been sufficient in such a sense as to render one not wanting and useless. But no man in seriousness and simplicity of mind can possibly think it so, who considers the state of religion in the heathen world before revelation, and its present state in those places which have borrowed no light from it; particularly the doubtfulness of some of the greatest men concerning things of the utmost importance, as well as the natural inattention and ignorance of mankind in general. It is impossible to say who would have been able to have reasoned out that whole system, which we call natural religion, in its genuine simplicity, clear of superstition; but there is certainly no ground to affirm that the generality could. If they could there is no sort of probability that they would. Admitting there were they would highly want a standing admonition to remind them of it, and inculcate it upon them. And further still, were they as much disposed to attend to religion as the better sort of men are; yet, even upon this supposition, there would be various occasions for supernatural instruction and assistance, and the greatest advantages might be afforded by them. So that to say revelation is a thing superfluous, what there was no need of, and what can be of no service, is, I think, to talk wildly and at random. Nor would it be more extravagant to affirm, that mankind is so

[1] [See especially Tindal, "Christianity as old as Creation." Lond. 1730.]

entirely at ease in the present state, and life so completely happy, that it is a contradiction to suppose our condition capable of being in any respect better.

There are other persons, not to be ranked with these, who seem to be getting into a way of neglecting, and as it were, overlooking revelation as of small importance, provided natural religion be kept to.[2] With little regard either to the evidence of the former, or to the objections against it, and even upon supposition of its truth, "the only design of it," say they, "must be to establish a belief of the moral system of nature, and to enforce the practice of natural piety and virtue. The belief and practice of these things were perhaps much promoted by the first publication of Christianity, but whether they are believed and practised,

[2] [On the value of natural religion there are three distinct views, each important. Leland, in his work "On the Advantage and Necessity of a Christian Revelation," ('the best and most useful English book,' says Bp. Hare, 'I ever read,') has proved, by an extensive collection of authorities, that, on the three great questions—the nature of God, the rule of moral duty, and a future state—ancient philosophers were profoundly wrong. Their conceptions of God were contradictory and often irrational; their systems of morality lamentably defective; their hope of a future life altogether uncertain. The errors thus maintained were in part the results of false philosophy, and in part of practical ungodliness.

In any case, it will be remarked, secondly, that natural religion must be defective, both in its lessons and in its motives. Its *lessons* tell us little of God or of our duties, and nothing of the author of our recovery and holiness. Its *conclusions* are all founded on subtle reasoning or on protracted experience. In the first case, mankind generally fail to understand them; in the second, men learn its laws only after they have acquired the habit of breaking them. Its *motives* are all feeble. Those that are certain are gathered from this life; those that are from a life to come are all contingent: worldly impulses it meets only by worldly impulses, and these last have to contend with what has in the mean time become habitual. This view is ably discussed in Wayland's "Moral Philosophy," bk. i. ch. vii. sec. 6.

A third view remains. Suppose the teaching of natural religion to be, within its own sphere, perfect. It tells us (say) of God, of human duty, of another life, with the utmost distinctness. *Then the brighter the light it sheds, the darker the shadows.* Clearness as to our duty

upon the evidence and motives of nature or of revelation, is no great matter."[3] This way of considering revelation, though it is not the same with the former, yet borders nearly upon it, and very much at length runs up into it, and requires to be particularly considered with regard to the persons who seem to be getting into this way. The consideration of it will likewise further show the extravagance of the former opinion, and the truth of the observations in answer to it just mentioned. And an inquiry into the importance of Christianity, cannot be an improper introduction to a treatise concerning the credibility of it.

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brings into harsher contrast the darkness of our guilt. The more glorious in duration our destiny, the more terrible our unfitness for it. It was this conviction that stopped many ancient inquirers in the pursuit of truth. They feared their own conclusions, not because they mistrusted the accuracy of them, but because these conclusions seemed to aggravate both their guilt and their misery. It is the excellency of the gospel to reveal clearly the Divine character, human duty, and eternal life, and yet more to show how God can forgive, how duty may, by Divine help, be fulfilled, and the awful future made an object not of dread but of hope. A gospel that only *confirmed* natural religion, could be no glad tidings of great joy to a guilty race. This view is discussed in Chalmers' Nat. Theol. bk. v. ch. iv.; and stated by McCosh, "Method of the Div. Gov." bk. iv.; in striking language by Pascal, "Thoughts," p. 137, Pearce's ed.; and in "The Restoration of Belief," p. 376.]

[3] Invenis multos——propterea nolle fieri Christianos, quia quasi sufficiunt sibi de bonâ vitâ suâ. Bene vivere opus est, ait. Quid mihi præcepturus est Christus? Ut bene vivam? Jam bene vivo. Quid mihi necessarius est Christus? Nullum homicidium, nullum furtum, nullam rapinam facio, res alienas non concupisco, nullo adulterio contaminor. Nam inveniatur in vitâ meâ aliquid quod reprehendatur, et qui reprehenderit faciat Christianum.—*Aug. in Psal.* xxxi.

[You find that many are unwilling to become Christians because they are satisfied with the correctness of their own lives. "A good life is the main thing," says one: "What then will Christ teach me? To live well? My life is already good. How can Christ be necessary to me? Neither homicide, robbery, nor rapine, am I guilty of. I covet no man's possessions. No stain of adultery attaches to me. Let some flaw be first found in my conduct, and then the finder may make me a Christian."]

Now if God has given a revelation to mankind, and commanded those things which are commanded in Christianity, it is evident, at first sight, that it cannot in any wise be an indifferent matter whether we obey or disobey those commands, c unless we are certainly assured that we know all the reasons for them, and that all those reasons are now ceased with regard to mankind in general, or to ourselves in particular. And it is absolutely impossible we can be assured of this; for our ignorance of these reasons proves nothing in the case, since the whole analogy of nature shows, what is indeed in itself evident, that there may be infinite reasons for things with which we are not acquainted.

But the importance of Christianity will more distinctly A appear by considering it more distinctly; first, as a republication and external institution of natural or essential religion, adapted to the present circumstances of mankind, and intended to promote natural piety and virtue; and secondly, as containing an account of a dispensation of things not discoverable by reason, in consequence of which, several distinct precepts are enjoined us. For though natural religion is the foundation and principal part of Christianity, it is not in any sense the whole of it.

I. Christianity is the republication of natural religion. It 1 instructs mankind in the moral system of the world; that it is the work of an infinitely perfect Being, and under his government; that virtue is his law; and that he will finally judge mankind in righteousness, and render to all according to their works in a future state. And, which is very material, it teaches natural religion in its genuine simplicity; a free from those superstitions with which it is totally corrupted, and under which it was in a manner lost.

Revelation is further an authoritative publication of natu- b ral religion, and so affords the evidence of testimony for the truth of it. Indeed the miracles and prophecies recorded in Scripture were intended to prove a particular dispensation of Providence, the redemption of the world by the Messiah; but this does not hinder, but that they may also prove God's general providence over the world as our moral Governor and Judge. And they evidently do prove it; because this 1 character of the Author of Nature is necessarily connected

with, and implied in, that particular revealed dispensation of things; it is likewise continually taught expressly, and insisted upon, by those persons who wrought the miracles and delivered the prophecies. So that indeed natural religion seems as much proved by the Scripture revelation, as it would have been, had the design of revelation been nothing else than to prove it.

But it may possibly be disputed how far miracles can prove natural religion, and notable objections may be urged against this proof of it, considered as a matter of speculation;[4] but considered as a practical thing there can be none. For suppose a person to teach natural religion to a nation, who had lived in total ignorance or forgetfulness of it, and to declare he was commissioned by God so to do; suppose him, in proof of his commission, to foretell things future, which no human foresight could have guessed at; to divide the sea with a word; feed great multitudes with bread from heaven; cure all manner of diseases; and raise the dead, even himself, to life; would not this give additional credibility to his teaching, a credibility beyond what that of a common man would have, and be an authoritative publication of the law of Nature, *i. e.*, a new proof of it? It would be a practical one of the strongest kind perhaps which human creatures are capable of having given them. The law of Moses then, and the gospel of Christ, are authoritative publications of the religion of Nature; they afford a proof of God's general providence as moral Governor of the world, as well as of his particular dispensations of providence towards sinful creatures revealed in the law and the gospel. As they are the only evidence of the latter so they are an additional evidence of the former.

[4] [The speculative difficulties to which Butler here refers are of two kinds:—Are miracles of themselves decisive proofs of the truth of a religious system; or need we to compare the miracles with the general morality of the system they are intended to support? And, further, can miracles prove natural religion, on the supposition that natural phenomena have failed to prove it—to prove it, that is, to the satisfaction of an inquirer? Without discussing either question, Butler shows that, to particular persons, and in particular stages of religious inquiry, miracles are practically an authoritative evidence of natural religion which is incorporated in the revealed.]

To show this further, let us suppose a man of the greatest and most improved capacity, who had never heard of revelation, convinced upon the whole, notwithstanding the disorders of the world, that it was under the direction and moral government of an infinitely perfect Being, but ready to question whether he were not got beyond the reach of his faculties; suppose him brought by this suspicion into great danger of being carried away by the universal bad example of almost every one around him, who appeared to have no sense, no practical sense at least, of these things; and this, perhaps, would be as advantageous a situation with regard to religion, as nature alone ever placed any man in. What a confirmation now must it be to such a person, all at once to find that this moral system of things was revealed to mankind, in the name of that infinite Being, whom he had from principles of reason believed in; and that the publishers of the revelation proved their commission from him, by making it appear that he had entrusted them with a power of suspending and changing the general laws of Nature!

Nor must it by any means be omitted, for it is a thing of the utmost importance, that life and immortality are eminently brought to light by the gospel. The great doctrines of a future state, the danger of a course of wickedness, and the efficacy of repentance,[5] are not only confirmed in the
gospel, but are taught, especially the last is, with a degree c
of light, to which that of nature is but darkness.

Further: As Christianity served these ends and purposes, when it was first published, by the miraculous publication itself, so it was intended to serve the same purposes in
future ages, by means of the settlement of a visible church, d
of a society, distinguished from common ones and from the rest of the world by peculiar religious institutions, by an instituted method of instruction, and an instituted form of external religion. Miraculous powers were given to the first preachers of Christianity, in order to their introducing it into the world; a visible church was established in order

[5] [' The efficacy of repentance,' rather the connexion of repentance with pardon. Repentance is essential to pardon, but is in no sense the efficacious influence that secures it, or the ground on which it rests. See Butler's own statement in chap. v. p. 214, and note.]

to continue it, and carry it on successively throughou
ages. Had Moses and the prophets, Christ and his apo
only taught, and by miracles proved, religion to their
temporaries, the benefits of their instructions would
reached but to a small part of mankind. Christianity
have been in a great degree sunk and forgotten in a very
ages. To prevent this appears to have been one reason
a visible church was instituted; to be, like a city up
hill, a standing memorial to the world of the duty whic
owe our Maker; to call men continually, both by exa
and instruction, to attend to it, and, by the form of reli
ever before their eyes, remind them of the reality; to be
repository of the oracles of God; to hold up the ligh
revelation in aid to that of Nature, and propagat
throughout all generations to the end of the world—
light of revelation, considered here in no other view tha
designed to enforce natural religion. And in proportio
Christianity is professed and taught in the world, relig
natural or essential religion, is thus distinctly and ad
tageously laid before mankind, and brought again and a
to their thoughts as a matter of infinite importance.
visible church has also a further tendency to promote n
ral religion, as being an instituted method of educa
originally intended to be of more peculiar advantage
those who would conform to it. For one end of the insti
tion was, that by admonition and reproof, as well as inst
tion, by a general regular discipline and public exercise
religion, *the body of Christ*, as the Scripture speaks, sh
be *edified*, i. e., trained up in piety and virtue for a hig
and better state. This settlement then appearing thus be
ficial; tending in the nature of the thing to answer, an
some degree actually answering, those ends; it is to
remembered that the very notion of it implies positive
stitutions, for the visibility of the church consists in th
Take away every thing of this kind, and you lose the v
notion itself. So that if the things now mentioned are
vantages, the reason and importance of positive instituti
in general is most obvious; since without them these
vantages could not be secured to the world. And it is m
idle wantonness to insist upon knowing the reasons w
such particular ones were fixed upon rather than others.

The benefit arising from this supernatural assistance, which Christianity affords to natural religion, is what some persons are very slow in apprehending. And yet it is a thing distinct in itself, and a very plain obvious one. For will any in good earnest really say that the bulk of mankind in
the heathen world were in as advantageous a situation with 3
regard to natural religion, as they are now amongst us; that it was laid before them, and enforced upon them, in a manner as distinct and as much tending to influence their practice?[a]

The objections against all this, from the perversion of 4
Christianity and from the supposition of its having had but little good influence, however innocently they may be proposed, yet cannot be insisted upon as conclusive, upon any
principles but such as lead to downright Atheism; because (a)
the manifestation of the law of nature by reason, which, upon all principles of Theism must have been from God, has been perverted and rendered ineffectual in the same manner.
It may indeed, I think, truly be said, that the good effects (b)
of Christianity have not been small, nor its supposed ill effects any effects at all of it, properly speaking. Perhaps too the things themselves done have been aggravated; and
if not, Christianity hath been often only a pretence, and the (c)
same evils in the main would have been done upon some other pretence. However great and shocking as the corruptions and abuses of it have really been, they cannot be insisted upon as arguments against it upon principles of Theism. For one cannot proceed one step in reasoning upon natural religion, any more than upon Christianity, without laying it down as a first principle, that the dispensations of Providence are not to be judged of by their perversions, but by their genuine tendencies; not by what they (d)
do actually seem to effect but by what they would effect if mankind did their part; that part which is justly put and left upon them. It is altogether as much the language of

[a] ["Even under the most favourable circumstances the human mind has never, when unassisted by revelation, deduced from the course of things around us any such principles of duty or motives to the performance of it as were sufficient to produce any decided effect upon the moral character of man."—Wayland, as above. See also Lowth's "Directions on the Reading of the Scriptures," chap. x.; and Locke's "Reasonableness of Christianity," p. 113, ed. 1815.]

one as of the other; *He that is unjust let him be unjust still; and he that is holy let him be holy still.*[7] The light of reason does not, any more than that of revelation, force men to submit to its authority; both admonish them of what they ought to do and avoid, together with the consequences of each, and after this leave them at full liberty to act just as they please, till the appointed time of judgment. Every moment's experience shows that this is God's general rule of government.

To return then: Christianity being a promulgation of the law of Nature, being moreover an authoritative promulgation of it, with new light and other circumstances of peculiar advantage, adapted to the wants of mankind; these things fully show its importance. And it is to be observed further, that as the nature of the case requires, so all Christians are commanded to contribute by their profession of Christianity to preserve it in the world, and render it such a promulgation and enforcement of religion. For it is the very scheme of the gospel, that each Christian should in his degree contribute towards continuing and carrying it on; all by uniting in the public profession and external practice of Christianity; some by instructing, by having the oversight and taking care of this religious community, the Church of God. Now this further shows the importance of Christianity, and, which is what I chiefly intend, its importance in a practical sense; or the high obligations we are under to take it into our most serious consideration, and the danger there must necessarily be, not only in treating it despitefully, which I am not now speaking of, but in disregarding and neglecting it. For this is neglecting to do what is expressly enjoined us, for continuing those benefits to the world, and transmitting them down to future times. And all this holds, even though the only thing to be considered in Christianity, were its subserviency to natural religion. But,

II. Christianity is to be considered in a further view, as containing an account of a dispensation of things not at all discoverable by reason, in consequence of which several distinct precepts are enjoined us. Christianity is not only an external institution of natural religion, and a new promulgation of God's general providence as righteous Governor

[7] Rev. xxii. 11.

and Judge of the world, but it contains also a revelation of a particular dispensation of Providence, carrying on by his Son and Spirit for the recovery and salvation of mankind, who are represented in Scripture to be in a state of ruin. And in consequence of this revelation being made, we are commanded *to be baptized*, not only *in the name of the Father*, but also *of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost:* and other obligations of duty, unknown before, to the Son and the Holy Ghost are revealed. Now the importance of these duties may be judged of by observing that they arise, not from positive command merely, but also from the offices which appear from Scripture to belong to those Divine persons in the gospel dispensation, or from the relations which we are there informed they stand in to us. By reason is revealed the relation which God the Father stands in to us. Hence arises the obligation of duty which we are under to him. In Scripture are revealed the relations which the Son and Holy Spirit stand in to us. Hence arise the obligations of duty which we are under to them. The truth of the case, as one may speak, in each of these three respects being admitted, that God is the governor of the world, upon the evidence of reason; that Christ is the mediator between God and man, and the Holy Ghost our guide and sanctifier, upon the evidence of revelation; the truth of the case, I say, in each of these respects being admitted, it is no more a question why it should be commanded that we be baptized in the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost, than that we be baptized in the name of the Father. This matter seems to require to be more fully stated.[8]

[8] See the Nature, Obligation, and Efficacy of the Christian Sacraments, etc.; and Colliber on Revealed Religion, as there quoted [by Dr. Waterland. See V. Mildert's ed. of his works, vol. v. p. 439. A distinction frequently noticed (see Chalmers' Nat. Theol. book v. chap. iv.) may make the text clearer. The ethics of natural religion, it is remarked, is one thing; the objects (or facts) of natural religion another. Natural religion tells us nothing of a Redeemer or a Sanctifier; but when once a Redeemer and Sanctifier are revealed, even natural religion tells us with what feelings we ought to regard them. Love and obedience to the Father, the Son, and the Spirit, are moral duties, and spring out of the very relations we sustain to them—immediately those relations

Let it be remembered then that religion comes under the twofold consideration of internal and external; for the latter is as real a part of religion, of true religion, as the former. Now when religion is considered under the first notion, as an inward principle to be exerted in such and such inward acts of the mind and heart, the essence of natural religion may be said to consist in religious regards to *God the Father Almighty*; and the essence of revealed religion, as distinguished from natural, to consist in religious regards to *the Son*, and to *the Holy Ghost*. And the obligation we are under of paying these religious regards to each of these Divine persons respectively, arises from the respective relations which they each stand in to us. How these relations are made known, whether by reason or revelation, makes no alteration in the case; because the duties arise out of the relations themselves, not out of the manner in which we are informed of them. The Son and Spirit have each his proper office in that great dispensation of Providence, the redemption of the world; the one our mediator, the other our sanctifier. Does not then the duty of religious regards to both these Divine persons, as immediately arise, to the view of reason, out of the very nature of these offices and relations; as the inward good-will and kind intention, which we owe to our fellow-creatures, arises out of the common relations between us and them? But it will be asked, "What are the inward religious regards appearing thus obviously due to the Son and Holy Spirit; as arising, not merely from command in Scripture, but from the very nature of the revealed relations which they stand in to us?" I answer, the religious regards of reverence, honour, love, trust, gratitude, fear, hope. In what external manner this inward worship is to be expressed is a matter of pure revealed command; as perhaps the external manner in which God the Father is to be worshipped may be more so than we are ready to think; but the worship, the internal worship itself, to the Son and Holy Ghost, is no further matter of pure revealed command than as the

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are known. How this love and obedience are to be expressed, so as to be most acceptable, are, as Butler notes, matters of revealed command.]

relations they stand in to us are matter of pure revelation; for the relations being known, the obligations to such internal worship are obligations of reason, arising out of those relations themselves. In short, the history of the gospel as immediately shows us the reason of these obligations, as it shows us the meaning of the words Son and Holy Ghost.

If this account of the Christian religion be just, those persons who can speak lightly of it, as of little consequence provided natural religion be kept to, plainly forget that Christianity, even what is peculiarly so called, as distinguished from natural religion, has yet somewhat very important, even of a moral nature. For the office of our Lord being made known, and the relation he stands in to us, the obligation of religious regards to him is plainly moral, as much as charity to mankind is; since this obligation arises, before external command, immediately out of that his office and relation itself. Those persons appear to forget that revelation is to be considered, as informing us of somewhat new in the state of mankind and in the government of the world; as acquainting us with some relations we stand in which could not otherwise have been known. And these relations being real, though before revelation we could be under no obligations from them, yet upon their being revealed there is no reason to think but that neglect of behaving suitably to them will be attended with the same kind of consequences under God's government, as neglecting to behave suitably to any other revelations made known to us by reason. And ignorance, whether unavoidable or voluntary, so far as we can possibly see, will just as much, and just as little, excuse in one case as in the other; the ignorance being supposed equally unavoidable, or equally voluntary, in both cases.

If therefore Christ be indeed the mediator between God and man, *i. e.*, if Christianity be true, if he be indeed our Lord, our Saviour, and our God; no one can say what may follow, not only the obstinate but the careless disregard to him in those high relations. Nay no one can say, what may follow such disregard even in the way of natural consequence.* For, as the natural consequences of vice in this life are

* P. 82. 83.

doubtless to be considered as judicial punishments inflicted by God; so likewise, for aught we know, the judicial punishments of the future life may be, in a like way or a like sense, the natural consequence of vice;[10] of men's violating or disregarding the relations which God has placed them in here, and made known to them.

Again: If mankind are corrupted and depraved in their moral character, and so are unfit for that state which Christ is gone to prepare for his disciples; and if the assistance of God's Spirit be necessary to renew their nature in the degree requisite to their being qualified for that state; all which is implied in the express, though figurative declaration, *Except a man be born of the Spirit he cannot enter into the kingdom of God*:[11] supposing this, is it possible any serious person can think it a slight matter whether or no he makes use of the means, expressly commanded by God, for obtaining this Divine assistance? especially since the whole analogy of Nature shows that we are not to expect any benefits without making use of the appointed means for obtaining or enjoying them. Now reason shows us nothing of the particular immediate means of obtaining either temporal or spiritual benefits. This therefore we must learn, either from experience or revelation. And experience the present case does not admit of.

Concl. The conclusion from all this evidently is, that, Christianity being supposed either true or credible, it is unspeakable irreverence, and really the most presumptuous rashness, to treat it as a light matter. It can never justly be esteemed of little consequence till it be positively supposed false. Nor do I know a higher and more important obligation which we are under than that of examining most seriously into the evidence of it, supposing its credibility, and of embracing it upon supposition of its truth.

2 The two following deductions may be proper to be added, in order to illustrate the foregoing observations, and to prevent their being mistaken.

1 First, Hence we may clearly see where lies the distinction between what is positive and what is moral in religion. Moral *precepts* are precepts, the reasons of which we see; positive *precepts* are precepts the reasons of which we do not

[10] Chap. v. [11] John iii. 5.

sec.[12] Moral *duties* arise out of the nature of the case itself, b prior to external command. Positive *duties* do not arise out of the nature of the case, but from external command; nor would they be duties at all were it not for such command, received from him whose creatures and subjects we are. But the manner in which the nature of the case, or the fact c of the relation, is made known, this doth not denominate any duty either positive or moral. That we be baptized in the name of the Father, is as much a positive duty as that we be baptized in the name of the Son; because both arise equally from revealed command, though the relation which we stand in to God the Father is made known to us by reason; the relation we stand in to Christ by revelation only. On the other hand, the dispensation of the gospel admitted, gratitude as immediately comes due to Christ, from his being the voluntary minister of this dispensation, as it is due to God the Father, from his being the fountain of all good; though the first is made known to us by revelation only, the second by reason. Hence also we may see, d and, for distinctness' sake, it may be worth mentioning, that positive institutions come under a twofold consideration. They are either institutions founded on natural religion, as baptism in the name of the Father; though this has also a particular reference to the gospel dispensation, for it is in the name of God, as the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ;

[12] This is the distinction between moral and positive precepts considered respectively as such. But yet, since the latter have somewhat of a moral nature, we may see the reason of them, considered in this view. Moral and positive precepts are, in some respects, alike, in other respects different. So far as they are like we discern the reasons of both; so far as they are different, we discern the reasons of the former, but not of the latter. See p. 161, &c., and p. 172. [Though the language of the text, as modified by Butler's note, is substantially accurate, it is important to add, that positive precepts have often a ground or reason visible to us, though that reason does not by itself make the thing enjoined a moral duty. Bp. Taylor's definition may be advantageously compared with Butler's: 'Moral precepts,' says he, 'have their measure in natural reason, while in positive precepts the reasons and measure are incidental, economical, or political.' The reason of the first is eternal, the reason of the second temporary.]

or they are external institutions founded on revealed religion, as baptism in the name of the Son and of the Holy Ghost.

Secondly, From the distinction between what is moral and what is positive in religion, appears the ground of that peculiar preference which the Scripture teaches us to be due to the former.

The reason of positive institutions in general is very obvious; though we should not see the reason why such particular ones are pitched upon rather than others. Whoever therefore, instead of cavilling at words, will attend to the thing itself, may clearly see that positive institutions in general, as distinguished from this or that particular one, have the nature of moral commands; since the reasons of them appear. Thus, for instance, the *external* worship of God is a moral duty, though no particular mode of it be so. Care then is to be taken, when a comparison is made between positive and moral duties, that they be compared no further than as they are different; no further than as the former are positive, or arise out of mere external command, the reasons of which we are not acquainted with; and as the latter are moral, or arise out of the apparent reason of the case, without such external command. Unless this caution be observed, we shall run into endless confusion.

Now this being premised, suppose two standing precepts enjoined by the same authority; that, in certain conjunctures, it is impossible to obey both; that the former is moral, *i. e.*, a precept of which we see the reasons, and that they hold in the particular case before us; but that the latter is positive, *i. e.*, a precept of which we do not see the reasons: it is indisputable that our obligations are to obey the former; because there is an apparent reason for this preference, and none against it. Further, positive institutions, I suppose all those which Christianity enjoins, are means to a moral end: and the end must be acknowledged more excellent than the means. Nor is observance of these institutions any religious obedience at all, or of any value, otherwise than as it proceeds from a moral principle. This seems to be the strict logical way of stating and determining this matter; but will, perhaps, be found less applicable to practice, than may be thought at first sight.

And therefore, in a more practical, though more lax way
of consideration, and taking the words, *moral law* and *positive* c
institutions in the popular sense; I add, that the whole moral
law is as much matter of revealed command, as positive insti-
tutions are: for the Scripture enjoins every moral virtue. In
this respect then they are both upon a level. But the moral
law is, moreover, written upon our hearts; interwoven into
our very nature. And this is a plain intimation of the Author
of it, which is to be preferred when they interfere.

But there is not altogether so much necessity for the de- d
termination of this question, as some persons seem to think.
Nor are we left to reason alone to determine it. For, first, 1
though mankind have, in all ages, been greatly prone to
place their religion in peculiar positive rites, by way of equi-
valent for obedience to moral precepts; yet, without making
any comparison at all between them, and consequently with-
out determining which is to have the preference, the nature
of the thing abundantly shows all notions of that kind to be
utterly subversive of true religion: as they are, moreover,
contrary to the whole general tenor of Scripture; and like-
wise to the most express particular declarations of it, that
nothing can render us accepted of God, without moral virtue.
Secondly, Upon the occasion of mentioning together positive 2
and moral duties, the Scripture always puts the stress of
religion upon the latter, and never upon the former: which,
though no sort of allowance to neglect the former, when
they do not interfere with the latter, yet it is a plain intima-
tion, that when they do, the latter are to be preferred. And
further, as mankind are for placing the stress of their reli-
gion anywhere, rather than upon virtue, lest both the reason
of the thing, and the general spirit of Christianity, appear-
ing in the intimation now mentioned, should be ineffectual
against this prevalent folly: our Lord himself, from whose
command alone the obligation of positive institutions arises,
has taken occasion to make the comparison between them
and moral precepts; when the Pharisees censured him for
eating with publicans and sinners; and also when they cen-
sured his disciples for *plucking the ears of corn on the sabbath-
day.* Upon this comparison, he has determined expressly,
and in form, which shall have the preference when they in-
terfere. And by delivering his authoritative determination

in a proverbial manner of expression, he has made it general: *I will have mercy, and not sacrifice.*[13] The propriety of the word *proverbial* is not the thing insisted upon: though I think the manner of speaking is to be called so. But that the manner of speaking very remarkably renders the determination general, is surely indisputable. For, had it, in the latter case, been said only, that God preferred mercy to the rigid observance of the Sabbath; even then, by parity of reason, most justly might we have argued, that he preferred mercy likewise, to the observance of other ritual institutions; and in general, moral duties, to positive ones. And thus the determination would have been general, though its being so were inferred and not expressed. But as the passage really stands in the Gospel, it is much stronger. For the sense and the very literal words of our Lord's answer are as applicable to any other instance of a comparison between positive and moral duties, as to this upon which they were spoken. And if, in case of competition, mercy is to be preferred to positive institutions, it will scarce be thought, that justice is to give place to them. It is remarkable too, that as the words are a quotation from the Old Testament, they are introduced on both the beforementioned occasions, with a declaration, that the Pharisees did not understand the meaning of them. This, I say, is very remarkable. For, since it is scarce possible, for the most ignorant person not to understand the literal sense of the passage in the Prophet;[14] and since understanding the literal sense would not have prevented their *condemning the guiltless;*[15] it can hardly be doubted, that the thing which our Lord really intended in that declaration was, that the Pharisees had not learnt from it, as they might, wherein the *general* spirit of religion consists: that it consists in moral piety and virtue, as distinguished from forms, and ritual observances. However, it is certain we may learn this from his Divine application of the passage in the Gospel.

[13] Matt. ix. 13, and xii. 7. [Obedience to positive command, it will be noticed, is often a more decisive test of religious character than the practice of moral duties. The latter may spring from a principle of natural morality; the former—if not the result of hypocrisy or of mechanical habit—is an evidence of reverence for the Divine will.]

[14] Hosea vi.

[15] See Matt. xii. 7.

But, as it is one of the peculiar weaknesses of human nature, when, upon a comparison of two things, one is found to be of greater importance than the other, to consider this other as of scarce any importance at all: it is highly necessary that we remind ourselves, how great presumption it is, to make light of any institutions of Divine appointment; that our obligations to obey all God's commands whatever are absolute and indispensable; and that commands merely positive, admitted to be from him, lay us under a moral obligation to obey them: an obligation moral in the strictest and most proper sense.[15]

To these things I cannot forbear adding, that the account now given of Christianity most strongly shows and enforces upon us the obligation of searching the Scriptures, in order to see what the scheme of revelation really is; instead of determining beforehand, from reason, what the scheme of it must be.[16] Indeed if in revelation there be found any passages, the seeming meaning of which is contrary to natural religion;[17] we may most certainly conclude, such seeming meaning not to be the real one. But it is not any degree of a presumption against an interpretation of Scripture, that such interpretation contains a doctrine which the light of Nature cannot discover;[18] or a precept, which the law of Nature does not oblige to.[19]

[15] See Matt. xii. 7. [16] See chap. iii.

[17] [This sentiment, as understood by Butler (who had a profound sense of human ignorance, and of the folly of applying it, to decide questions of theology), is just; but it is very liable to abuse. Clearly, the Bible must be so interpreted as to agree with *all known truth*, whether of natural religion or of general science. At the same time, to correct the theology of the Bible by the theology of nature, as finite and guilty men see and understand it, may involve the rejection of Bible theology entirely, and of the very light and teaching it was intended to supply. The converse of Butler's statement is equally true, and even more important: "If in natural theology there be found any facts, the seeming lesson of which is contrary to revealed religion, such seeming lesson is not the real one." Practically, it will be found that seeming meanings of Scripture, really erroneous, are corrected by other parts of Scripture itself.]

[18] P. 170, 171.

[19] [In reviewing this chapter, too much stress cannot be laid on the principle laid down by Dr. Chalmers. Christianity is not only

CHAPTER II.

OF THE SUPPOSED PRESUMPTION AGAINST A REVELATION, CONSIDERED AS MIRACULOUS.

[Christianity is, as we have seen (Chap. i.), important. Before considering particular objections to it, *revelation in general* is objected to; because, from the very nature of the case, it is above Nature, and so miraculous. The miraculousness of revelation, and miracles generally, will therefore be first considered. Are objections to revelation on this ground well founded?

A The objection lies, not against the particular doctrines of Christianity, but against revelation; and that on one of two grounds; either

1 Because the scheme of religion is not discoverable without revelation (or, see **2**). But this is no just objection; because there are in Nature innumerable things not discoverable by our natural faculties, but yet true and real.

2 Or, because revelation, as miraculous, is unlike the known course of Nature. But this is no just objection; because

a It is not probable that everything in the unknown course of Nature, is like something in the known.

b And, even in the known course of Nature, many things are unlike one another.

c The course of Nature is not so unlike revelation as many suppose, and this will hereafter appear.

Whether the above examples include all that is meant by miraculous, may be questioned. But the general idea expressed by the word being clear, note further

B That against revelation as miraculous, or against miracles as proofs of it, there could be no presumption at the beginning of the world; for

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a republication of natural religion, with added truth, but the added truth is adapted to the condition in which natural religion leaves us. "The first without the second"—the republication without the remedial addition—"would have been a message of terror and denunciation. It is the second which reconciles all difficulties; and besides adding the light of its own manifestation, it resolves all the doubts and hushes all the fears which the first had awakened."—*Lectures*, p. 50.]

1 A miracle has reference to the course of Nature, and implies something different from it. But at first no course had been established, and so there is no other objection to miracles at that time than to any other fact.

2 Or the argument may be put thus. The power exerted in creation (whether called miraculous or not), was different from what is exerted in the present course of Nature; and, whether that power was exerted so as to give a revelation, is a question that affects the degree, not the kind of power put forth. If this power be called miraculous, then the presumption against the use of such a power to give a revelation, is even less.

3 Add, that from history it seems that religion was not first reasoned out, but revealed—a fact that confirms natural religion, and may remove prejudices against subsequent communications.

C Nor is there any presumption against miracles, or revelation as miraculous, after the course of Nature has been settled; for

1 Generally, we need a second ruined world, from which to take the analogy; and, even from that case (a single one), our proofs would be precarious; and

2 Particularly, though there be presumption against miracles, yet

a As, in common facts, even a small amount of proof in their favour may set aside the presumption against them.

b We know so little upon what the course of Nature depends, that we cannot say miracles are more improbable than many general facts.

c Looking at the religious interests of the race, we see reasons for them.

d Comparing them, as we ought, with extraordinary events (as comets, earthquakes), the presumption against them seems almost as unfounded as the presumption against those events.

D Hence conclude

1 That there is no such presumption against miracles as renders them incredible.

2 That, on the contrary, as there are reasons for them, there is a presumption in their favour; and

3 That, as compared with the extraordinary facts of Nature, there is no peculiar presumption against them at all.

HAVING shown the importance of the Christian revelation, and the obligations which we are under seriously to attend to it, upon supposition of its truth or its credibility; the next thing in order is to consider the supposed presumptions against revelation in general, which shall be the subject of this chapter; and the objections against the Christian in particular, which shall be the subject of some following ones.[1] For it seems the most natural method to remove these prejudices against Christianity, before we proceed to the consideration of the positive evidence for it, and the objections against that evidence.[2]

It is, I think, commonly supposed that there is some peculiar presumption, from the analogy of Nature, against the Christian scheme of things, at least against miracles; so as that stronger evidence is necessary to prove the truth and reality of them, than would be sufficient to convince us of other events, or matters of fact. Indeed the consideration of this supposed presumption cannot but be thought very insignificant by many persons. Yet, as it belongs to the subject of this treatise, so it may tend to open the mind and remove some prejudices; however needless the consideration of it be upon its own account.

A 1. I find no appearance of a presumption, from the analogy of Nature, against the general scheme of Christianity, that God created and invisibly governs the world by Jesus Christ; and by Him also will hereafter judge it in righteousness, *i.e.* render to every one according to his works, and that good men are under the secret influence of his Spirit. Whether these things are, or are not, to be called miraculous, is perhaps only a question about words;[3] or, however, is of no

[1] Ch. iii. iv. v. vi. [2] Ch. vii.

[3] [It must be noted, that in Butler's view a revelation is necessarily miraculous—that is, it is something not discovered by reason or experience, and it is more or less unlike the course of Nature. There may be also what is called miraculous evidence in proof of the revelation so given; but, independently of such evidence, a revelation is itself supernatural. If this view be admitted, the number of miracles used to illustrate and enforce it, to which objection is often taken, is a subordinate question that need raise no difficulty.

Hence, a denial of miraculous evidence leads to a denial of the possibility of a revelation, itself a miracle (see 'Eclipse of Faith')

moment in the case. If the analogy of Nature raises any presumption against this general scheme of Christianity, it must be either because it is not discoverable by reason or experience, or else because it is unlike that course of Nature which is. But analogy raises no presumption against the truth of this scheme upon either of these accounts.

First, there is no presumption from analogy, against the 1
truth of it, upon account of its not being discoverable by reason or experience. For suppose one who never heard of revelation, of the most improved understanding, and acquainted with our whole system of natural philosophy and natural religion; such an one could not but be sensible, that it was but a very small part of the natural and moral system of the universe which he was acquainted with. He could not but be sensible that there must be innumerable things, in the dispensations of Providence past, in the invisible government over the world at present carrying on, and in what is to come, of which he was wholly ignorant,[4] and which could not be discovered without revelation. Whether the scheme of Nature be, in the strictest sense, infinite or not, it is evidently vast even beyond all possible imagination. And doubtless that part of it, which is opened to our view, is but as a point, in comparison of the whole plan of Providence, reaching throughout eternity past and future; in comparison of what is even now going on in the remote parts of the boundless universe, nay in comparison of the whole scheme of this world. And, therefore, that things lie beyond the natural reach of our faculties is no sort of presumption against the truth and reality of them; because it is certain there are innumerable things, in the constitution and government of the universe, which are thus beyond the natural
reach of our faculties. Secondly, analogy raises no pre- 2
sumption against any of the things contained in this general doctrine of Scripture now mentioned, upon account of their being unlike the known course of Nature. For there is no presumption at all from analogy, that the *whole* course of

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and even (as Paley has shown) to a denial of the existence of God, all of whose extraordinary acts are necessarily miraculous.]

[4] P. 133.

things, or Divine government, naturally unknown to us, and *everything* in it, is like to anything in that which is known; and therefore no peculiar presumption against anything in the former, upon account of its being unlike to anything in the latter. And in the constitution and natural government of the world, as well as in the moral government of it, we see things, in a great degree, unlike one another; and therefore ought not to wonder at such unlikeness between things visible and invisible. However, the scheme of Christianity is by no means entirely unlike the scheme of Nature, as will appear in the following part of this treatise.

The notion of a miracle, considered as a proof of a Divine mission, has been stated with great exactness by divines, and is, I think, sufficiently understood by every one. There are also invisible miracles, the incarnation of Christ, for instance, which, being secret, cannot be alleged as a proof of such a mission, but require themselves to be proved by visible miracles. Revelation itself too is miraculous, and miracles are the proof of it; and the supposed presumption against these shall presently be considered. All which I have been observing here is, that whether we choose to call everything in the dispensations of Providence, not discoverable without revelation, nor like the known course of things, miraculous; and whether the general Christian dispensation now mentioned is to be called so or not, the foregoing observations seem certainly to show that there is no presumption against it from the analogy of Nature.

II. There is no presumption, from analogy, against some operations which we should now call miraculous, particularly none against a revelation at the beginning of the world; nothing of such presumption against it, as is supposed to be implied or expressed in the word *miraculous*. For a miracle, in its very notion, is relative to a course of Nature, and implies somewhat different from it, considered as being so.[5]

[5] [Butler's language on what constitutes a miracle is remarkably guarded and clear. His 'Analogy' was published before Hume's 'Essay on Miracles,' but it answered by anticipation a large part of that writer's theory. "A miracle" says Hume, in substance, "is a transgression of the laws of Nature, but the laws of Nature are established by unalterable experience: Miracles, therefore, are

Now, either there was no course of Nature at the time which we are speaking of, or, if there were, we are not acquainted what the course of Nature is, upon the first peopling of worlds. And therefore the question, whether mankind had a revelation made to them at that time, is to be considered, not as a question concerning a miracle, but as a common question of fact. And we have the like reason, be it more or less, to admit the report of tradition, concerning this question, and concerning common matters of fact of the same antiquity; for instance, what part of the earth was first peopled.

Or thus: When mankind was first placed in this state, there 2
was a power exerted, totally different from the present course of Nature. Now, whether this power, thus wholly different from the present course of Nature, for we cannot properly apply to it the word *miraculous*; whether this power stopped immediately after it had made man, or went on, and exerted itself further in giving him a revelation, is a question of the same kind, as whether an ordinary power exerted itself in such a particular degree and manner or not.

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contrary to uniform experience. But our belief of facts rests on experience of the truth of testimony, and *that* experience is variable. Hence, as the variable experience must yield to the uniform, miracles are not credible, nor can any testimony make them so." Here there are nearly as many fallacies as words. Hume denied the existence of an external world; his "laws of Nature" are simply ideas in a certain succession: so that to deny such a succession as miracles imply is on his theory to deny admitted facts. "Laws of Nature," moreover, are simply uniformities of sequence, yet he here intimates that they may be "transgressed;" a word properly applicable to moral delinquencies. There is one sophism in 'experience,' which either begs the question, or asserts that miracles are contrary to particular experience—which is nothing to the purpose. Another in "contrary," for a miracle is not contrary to the experience even of the man who has never seen one. Campbell shows that so far from belief in testimony being founded on experience, it is distrust of testimony that experience gives. If Hume's reasoning, moreover, be sound, then creation and a deluge are both incredible; and even on Hume's reasoning we must receive the gospel, for to believe the evidences of religion untrue is, *under the circumstances*, to admit a greater violation of the common course of human beha-

Or suppose the power exerted in the formation of the world be considered as miraculous, or rather, be called by that name, the case will not be different; since it must be acknowledged that such a power was exerted. For supposing it acknowledged that our Saviour spent some years in a course of working miracles, there is no more presumption, worth mentioning, against his having exerted this miraculous power in a certain degree greater, than in a certain degree less; in one or two more instances, than in one or two fewer; in this, than in another manner.

It is evident then that there can be no peculiar presumption, from the analogy of Nature, against supposing a revelation when man was first placed upon the earth.[6]

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viour than any of the miracles of the gospel, or even than all combined. All these fallacies are met by Butler's statements. "A miracle," says he, "is something different from the course of Nature as known;" *contrary* to it is another thing; different from it even, as unknown, is more than can be affirmed: for miracles may be parts of a higher law.—Compare 'Restoration of Belief,' p. 336. "The difference between the natural and the supernatural is relative, not absolute—it is not essential. . . . These miracles, so we on earth must call them, and which we are accustomed to speak of as inroads upon the course of Nature, are, if truly considered, so many fragmentary instances of the eternal order of an upper world."

It is instructive to notice that geology furnishes one of the most decisive replies in fact to Hume's sophism. "Any one," says Sir C. Lyell, "who presumes to dogmatize respecting the absolute uniformity of the order of Nature, is rebuked by geological evidence of the changes which that order has already undergone."—*Principles of Geology*, 153–164.]

[6] ["That man could not have *made* himself is often appealed to as a proof of the agency of a Divine *Creator*; and that mankind could not in the first instance have civilized themselves is a proof of the same kind, and of precisely equal strength, of the agency of a Divine *Instructor*." . . . So reasons Archbishop Whately ('On the Origin of Civilization,' p. 19), applying his remarks to religion also. Humboldt, Niebuhr, and others, are quoted as sustaining the same views. President Smith, of New Jersey, expresses his opinion that both reason and history favour the conclusion that life even could not have been preserved in the savage state, unless man had received some instruction from his Creator.]

Add, that there does not appear the least intimation in 3
history or tradition that religion was first reasoned out; but the whole of history and tradition makes for the other side, that it came into the world by revelation. Indeed the state of religion, in the first ages of which we have any account, seems to suppose and imply that this was the original of it amongst mankind. And these reflections together, without taking in the peculiar authority of Scripture, amount to real and a very material degree of evidence, that there was a revelation at the beginning of the world. Now this, as it is a confirmation of natural religion, and therefore mentioned in the former part of this treatise;[7] so likewise it has a tendency to remove any prejudices against a subsequent revelation.

III. But still it may be objected, that there is some peculiar presumption, from analogy, against miracles, particularly against revelation, after the settlement and during the continuance of a course of Nature.

Now, with regard to this supposed presumption, it is to be 1
observed in general that before we can have ground for raising what can, with any propriety, be called an *argument* from analogy, for or against revelation considered as somewhat miraculous, we must be acquainted with a similar or parallel case. But the history of some other world, seemingly in like circumstances with our own, is no more than a parallel case; and therefore nothing short of this can be so. Yet could we come at a presumptive proof, for or against a revelation, from being informed whether such world had one or not; such a proof, being drawn from one single instance only, must be infinitely precarious. More particularly, first 2
of all, there is a very strong presumption against common speculative truths, and against the most ordinary facts, before the proof of them, which yet is overcome by almost any proof. There is a presumption of millions to one against the story of Cæsar, or of any other man.[8] For suppose a number

[7] P. 124, etc.

[8] [The statement in this paragraph (that men believe common facts, though the chances are as millions to one against them, and that the miraculousness of any such fact would add little appreciable to the presumption against it) is not accurate. There is, indeed, a double error. It confounds history and prophecy,

of common facts so and so circumstanced, of which one had no kind of proof, should happen to come into one's thoughts, every one would, without any possible doubt, conclude them to be false. And the like may be said of a single common fact. And from hence it appears that the question of importance, as to the matter before us, is concerning the degree of the peculiar presumption supposed against miracles; not whether there be any peculiar presumption at all against them. For if there be the presumption of millions to one against the most common facts, what can a small presumption, additional to this, amount to though it be peculiar? It cannot be estimated, and is as nothing. The only material question is, whether there be any such presumption against
b miracles, as to render them in any sort incredible. Secondly, if we leave out the consideration of religion, we are in such

chances before fact, with chances after it, the report of an event that has occurred with the prediction of an event yet to come, and then affirms that the improbability of the truth of each is so great that the miraculousness of the event (supposing it miraculous) adds nothing appreciable to the improbability. For example, with a twenty-sided die the improbability beforehand of throwing any given number is as nineteen to one. After the die is thrown, and we are told that ten (say) has come up, we deem the report as not in itself improbable; *some* number must have come up and each number is in itself as improbable as another. Improbabilities before the fact (to use the logical distinction) differ from improbabilities after it. Those last are always a reason for doubt; the former are so or not as it may happen. (See Mill's *Logic*, vol. ii. p. 192—4, quoted by Fitzgerald). A miracle is, of course, of the nature of an improbability after the fact. That is, it is in itself unlikely, and needs to have proportionately decisive evidence.

Though this correction of Butler's statement seems at first sight to weaken his argument for the probability of miracles, it strengthens the evidence for Christianity as a whole. The chances, for example, against the fortuitous truth of the direct prophecies concerning Christ (upwards of a hundred) are innumerable. It is millions to one that a Messiah should appear at the time, in the place, with the qualities, indicated, unless all had been done according to God's determinate counsel. Once, however, let it be admitted that a Messiah has appeared, miraculously incarnate; and his miracles become rather likely than otherwise. The chances against them are small. They are completely of a piece with all his proceedings.]

total darkness upon what causes, occasions, reasons, or circumstances, the present course of Nature depends, that there does not appear any improbability for or against supposing, that five or six thousand years may have given scope for causes, occasions, reasons, or circumstances, from whence miraculous interpositions may have arisen. And from this, joined with the foregoing observation, it will follow that there must be a presumption, beyond all comparison greater, against the *particular* common facts just now instanced in, than against miracles *in general*, before any evidence of either. But, thirdly, take in the consideration of religion, or the moral system of the world, and then we see distinct particular reasons for miracles; to afford mankind instruction additional to that of Nature, and to attest the truth of it. And this gives a real credibility to the supposition, that it might be part of the original plan of things that there should be miraculous interpositions. Then, lastly, miracles must not be compared to common natural events, or to events which, though uncommon, are similar to what we daily experience; but to the extraordinary phenomena of nature. And then the comparison will be between the presumption against miracles, and the presumption against such uncommon appearances, suppose, as comets, and against there being any such powers in Nature as magnetism and electricity, so contrary to the properties of other bodies not endued with these powers. And before any one can determine whether there be any peculiar presumption against miracles more than against other extraordinary things, he must consider what, upon first hearing, would be the presumption against the last-mentioned appearances and powers to a person acquainted only with the daily, monthly, and annual course of Nature respecting this earth, and with those common powers of matter which we every day see.

Upon all this I conclude, that there certainly is no such presumption against miracles as to render them in any wise incredible; that, on the contrary, our being able to discern reasons for them gives a positive credibility to the history of them, in cases where those reasons hold; and that it is by no means certain that there is any peculiar presumption at all, from analogy, even in the lowest degree, against miracles, as distinguished from other extraordinary phenomena;

though it is not worth while to perplex the reader with inquiries into the abstract nature of evidence, in order to determine a question which, without such inquiries, we see is of no importance.

CHAPTER III.

OF OUR INCAPACITY OF JUDGING WHAT WERE TO BE EXPECTED IN A REVELATION; AND THE CREDIBILITY, FROM ANALOGY, THAT IT MUST CONTAIN THINGS APPEARING LIABLE TO OBJECTIONS.

[The objection to Christianity, as miraculous, has been already considered (Chap. ii.). Other objections against its deficiencies, its doctrine of redemption, its want of universality, its evidences, are considered hereafter. In this chapter, objections against Christianity as a scheme (not against its evidences), are shown to be frivolous. It is probable, from analogy, that Christianity will contain much that is different FROM OUR EXPECTATIONS (or anticipations, see note 3), and therefore OBJECTIONABLE.

A Apply the first part of this statement to Christianity, as a whole. It is likely to contain much that is different from our expectations.

1 In Nature we find that God rules and instructs according to certain laws. In Scripture we are told new truths connected with his government; and these two make together one scheme of Providence.

2 We are, in fact, incompetent judges of the first, as has been shown. It is, therefore, probable that we shall be incompetent judges of the second. Both are likely to appear objectionable.

B Apply this statement to instruction by inspiration. It is likely to differ from what we expect.

In the case of natural religion, we know not, before experience, by what laws or means, or to what degree, or by what evidence, or in what mode, or even through what faculty it will be imparted. So in what is revealed.

And, if any object that we are competent judges on some points, that *oral* revelation, for example, is a better means of

avoiding mistakes than written; it is answered, that we are not told what God's purpose is, and so cannot compare the different means for securing it.

C Hence the following conclusions:

1 As to Christianity as a whole, we are incompetent judges of what may be expected in a revelation. Therefore, the only question is, whether Christianity is a real revelation; not whether it is what we expect it to be. The only valid objection to it, if there be any, is against its evidence.

2 As to the way in which its instruction is given, the only question is, whether it is a Divine book, not whether it is such or such a book. For deficient style, or deficient evidence of genuineness, or various readings in the text, are no proofs against it, unless it was promised that a Divine revelation should be free from these presumed difficulties. And

3 As to interpretation, we must accept that meaning which seems the true one, and not raise any objection that it is less clearly expressed than we hoped.

Obj. To these conclusions, it may be objected, that internal improbabilities (that is, things contrary to expectation) weaken external probable proof. True. But, as has been seen, real internal improbabilities are overcome by the most common testimony. And, in revelation, we scarcely know what improbabilities are.

D To expand this last statement, and explain the second part of the statement made at the outset, that revelation is likely to contain much that appears OBJECTIONABLE, note

1 That the instruction given to men and brutes respectively, is very objectionable in its limits, thus: it is objectionable

a That we should be instructed in the laws of matter more easily and truly than in the cure of diseases.

b That we discover, as by accident, what years of inquiry fail to attain.

c That language is liable to infinite abuse; and is, at best, ambiguous.

d That brute instinct is often more skilful than human prudence.

2 So is revealed instruction likely to be liable to similar objections, as to its character and degrees. Nor are these objections more numerous than we might expect them to be.

E Apply this reason to a particular case, to see more clearly its force and applicability. It is said, the gifts in the apostolic age were not miraculous, because not used in an orderly manner. To which answer.

1 Those who used them had power over them; and the use of them depended, as might be expected, on the prudence or imprudence of the possessor. So they are like other gifts; and, if it be said, these gifts should have been given only to the prudent, or that prudence ought to have been added to the gift, or that God should have interposed. Answer—

2 We cannot judge what ought to have been the degree of the gift; nor are gifts generally given in Nature according to the prudence of those who own them. Nor is instruction generally given in common life, in such forms only as best commend it to us.

F The analogy between the natural and revealed methods of instruction, may be further applied.

1 In Nature, practical rules of conduct are generally plain. So are the faith and behaviour of practical Christianity.

2 In Nature, exact thought is sometimes required for the study of parts; so in the study of parts of Scripture.

3 Progress in each department, is hindered by the same, or similar causes.

4 In Nature, as in Scripture, the full discovery of truth seems to depend on the progress of learning, of liberty, and upon the diligence of the studious. *All* the Bible is not now understood; nor is the whole of Nature.

To these analogies, between the instruction imparted by the two schemes (1), and between the two schemes themselves (2), it is objected,

1 That natural instruction is comparatively unimportant; whereas religious instruction is essential. Answer—

a This distinction is not material to the argument; which is, that Nature gives, not as we expect, but differently.

b Some of the things not told us in Nature *are* important, and even essential, to comfort; and

c Whatever be thought of these statements, still, neither in Nature, nor, therefore, in religion, does God dispense instruction according to our notions of its importance.

2 That Christianity, being professedly a remedial system, is not likely to be so open to objections or perversions, as natural revelation. Answer—

a If both are from the same hand, this arrangement is by no means incredible; since remedies in Nature (for diseases really fatal) are often late discovered, doubted, and perverted, etc. And further, on this principle of reasoning,

b If the remedies, natural or Christian, are not true, because not what we might expect, then the diseases themselves are not true, for they also are against expectation.

whole gather two conclusions; the one negative, and
›r positive.
t reason is no judge of ANYTHING in regard to revela-
because it is not judge of everything), for reason may

meaning of Scripture, and also,
morality; that is, not whether it is what we might
ect from a holy God, but whether it is plainly not
rary to holiness, and to what Nature teaches us of
1. It is true that objections are taken to Scripture
ality, but they apply equally to the constitution of
ure. Particular precepts also are objected to, but they
emporary, and refer to actions, not habits; and though
e to be perverted by enthusiasm, are of a piece with
ion as a system of probation.
evidence.
y, the truth of Christianity is clearly not affected by
ons against its scheme.
ich objections are founded upon principles which
ire contradicts. And the particular things objected to
eally analogous to the course of Nature.
heme of Christianity may even supply positive argu-
s in its favour, if it differs from the schemes which
usiasm and imposture have framed.]

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objections against the evidence for Christianity,
eged against the scheme of it; against the whole
hich it is put and left with the world, as well as
ral particular relations in Scripture; objections
the deficiencies of revelation; from things in it
men *foolishness*;[1] from its containing matters
hich have led, and it must have been foreseen
nto strange enthusiasm and superstition, and be
ve the purposes of tyranny and wickedness;
being universal; and, which is a thing of the
om its evidence not being so convincing and
s it might have been; for this last is sometimes
positive argument against its truth.[2] It would
deed impossible, to enumerate the several par-

1 Cor. i. 28. [2] See chap. vi.

ticulars comprehended under the objections here referred to, they being so various according to the different fancies of men. There are persons who think it a strong objection against the authority of Scripture, that it is not composed by rules of art, agreed upon by critics, for polite and correct writing. And the scorn is inexpressible, with which some of the prophetic parts of Scripture are treated; partly through the rashness of interpreters, but very much also on account of the hieroglyphical and figurative language in which they are left us. Some of the principal things of this sort shall be particularly considered in following chapters. But my design at present is to observe in general, with respect to this whole way of arguing, that upon supposition of a revelation, it is highly credible beforehand we should be incompetent judges of it to a great degree; and that it would contain many things appearing to us liable to great objections, in case we judge of it otherwise than by the analogy of Nature. And therefore, though objections against the evidence of Christianity are most seriously to be considered, yet objections against Christianity itself are, in a great measure, frivolous; almost all objections against it, excepting those which are alleged against the particular proofs of its coming from God. I express myself with caution, lest I should be mistaken to vilify reason, which is indeed the only faculty we have wherewith to judge concerning anything, even revelation itself; or be misunderstood to assert that a supposed revelation cannot be proved false from internal characters. For it may contain clear immoralities or contradictions, and either of these would prove it false. Nor will I take upon me to affirm, that nothing else can possibly render any supposed revelation incredible. Yet still the observation above is, I think, true beyond doubt, that objections against Christianity, as distinguished from objections against its evidence, are frivolous. To make out this is the general design of the present chapter. And with regard to the whole of it, I cannot but particularly wish that the proofs might be attended to, rather than the assertions cavilled at, upon account of any unacceptable consequences, whether real or supposed, which may be drawn from them. For, after all, that which is true must be admitted, though it should show us the shortness of our faculties; and that

we are in nowise judges of many things of which we are apt to think ourselves very competent ones. Nor will this be any objection with reasonable men, at least upon second thought it will not be any objection with such, against the justness of the following observations.

As God governs the world, and instructs his creatures, A
according to certain laws or rules in the known course of Nature, known by reason together with experience; so the Scripture informs us of a scheme of Divine providence addi- 1
tional to this. It relates that God has, by revelation, instructed men in things concerning his government, which they could not otherwise have known; and reminded them of things which they might otherwise know; and attested the truth of the whole by miracles. Now if the natural and the revealed dispensation of things are both from God, if they coincide with each other, and together make up one scheme of Providence; our being incompetent judges of one, must render it credible that we may be incompetent judges also of the other. Since, upon experience, the acknowledged constitution and course of Nature is found to be greatly different from what, before experience, would have been expected; and such as, men fancy, there lie great objections against; this renders it beforehand highly credible, that they may find the revealed dispensation likewise, if they judge of it as they do of the constitution of Nature, very different 2
from expectations formed beforehand, and liable in appearance to great objections; objections against the scheme itself, and against the degrees and manners of the miraculous interpositions by which it was attested and carried on. Thus suppose a prince to govern his dominions in the wisest manner possible by common known laws, and that upon some exigencies he should suspend these laws, and govern in several instances in a different manner; if one of his subjects were not a competent judge beforehand, by what common rules the government should or would be carried on, it could not be expected that the same person would be a competent judge, in what exigencies or in what manner, or to what degree, those laws commonly observed would be suspended or deviated from. If he were not a judge of the wisdom of the ordinary administration, there is no reason to think he would

be a judge of the wisdom of the extraordinary. If he thought he had objections against the former, doubtless, it is highly supposable, he might think also that he had objections against the latter. And thus as we fall into infinite follies and mistakes, whenever we pretend, otherwise than from experience and analogy, to judge of the constitution and course of Nature, it is evidently supposable beforehand that we should fall into as great, in pretending to judge in like manner, concerning revelation. Nor is there any more ground to expect that this latter should appear to us clear of objections than that the former should.

B These observations, relating to the whole of Christianity, are applicable to inspiration in particular. As we are in no sort judges beforehand, by what laws or rules, in what degree, or by what means, it were to have been expected that God would naturally instruct us; so upon supposition of his affording us light and instruction by revelation, additional to what he has afforded us by reason and experience, we are in no sort judges by what methods, and in what proportion, it were to be expected that this supernatural light and instruction would be afforded us. We know not beforehand what degree or kind of natural information it were to be expected God would afford men, each by his own reason and experience; nor how far he would enable and effectually dispose them to communicate it, whatever it should be, to each other; nor whether the evidence of it would be certain, highly probable, or doubtful; nor whether it would be given with equal clearness and conviction to all. Nor could we guess, upon any good ground I mean, whether natural knowledge, or even the faculty itself, by which we are capable of attaining it, reason, would be given us at once or gradually. In like manner, we are wholly ignorant what degree of new knowledge, it were to be expected, God would give mankind by revelation, upon supposition of his affording one; or how far, or in what way, he would interpose miraculously to qualify them, to whom he should originally make the revelation, for communicating the knowledge given by it; and to secure their doing it to the age in which they should live, and to secure its being transmitted to posterity. We are equally ignorant whether the evidence of it would be certain, or

highly probable, or doubtful;[3] or whether all who should have any degree of instruction from it, and any degree of evidence of its truth, would have the same; or whether the scheme would be revealed at once or unfolded gradually. Nay we are not in any sort able to judge whether it were to have been expected, that the revelation should have been committed to writing, or left to be handed down, and consequently corrupted by verbal tradition, and at length sunk under it if mankind so pleased, and during such time as they are permitted, in the degree they evidently are, to act as they will.

But it may be said "that a revelation in some of the above-mentioned circumstances, one, for instance, which was not committed to writing, and thus secured against danger of corruption, would not have answered its purpose." I ask, what purpose? It would not have answered all the purposes which it has now answered, and in the same degree; but it would have answered others, or the same in different degrees. And which of these were the purposes of God, and best fell in with his general government, we could not at all have determined beforehand.

Now since it has been shown that we have no principles of reason upon which to judge beforehand, how it were to be expected revelation should have been left, or what was most suitable to the Divine plan of government, in any of the forementioned respects; it must be quite frivolous to object afterwards as to any of them, against its being left in one way rather than another; for this would be to object against things upon account of their being different from expecta-

[3] See chap vi. [The heading of this chapter seems at first a violation of Butler's own principle. It is in sense: "We know not what to expect in revelation, and yet it may be expected to contain things apparently liable to objection." The *reasonings* of the chapter make the meaning plain. The *anticipations* of reason, apart from facts, are no sure guide as to what a revelation will contain. The *expectation* founded on analogy leads us to look for much that is apparently objectionable and mysterious. Bacon marks this distinction between the two words, when he calls the old philosophy "anticipatio mentis" (anticipation of the mind), and his own "interpretatio naturæ" (the interpretation of nature.)]

tions, which have been shown to be without reason. And thus we see, that the only question concerning the truth of Christianity is, whether it be a real revelation, not whether it be attended with every circumstance which we should have looked for; and concerning the authority of Scripture, whether it be what it claims to be, not whether it be a book of such sort, and so promulgated, as weak men are apt to
2 fancy a book containing a Divine revelation should. And therefore neither obscurity, nor seeming inaccuracy of style, nor various readings, nor early disputes, about the authors of particular parts; nor any other things of the like kind, though they had been much more considerable in degree than they are, could overthrow the authority of the Scripture; unless the prophets, apostles, or our Lord had promised that the book containing the Divine revelation should be secure from those things. Nor indeed can any objections overthrow such a kind of revelation as the Christian claims to be, since there are no objections against the morality of it,* but such as can show that there is no proof of miracles wrought originally in attestation of it; no appearance of anything miraculous in its obtaining in the world; nor any of prophecy, that is of events foretold, which human sagacity could not foresee. If it can be shown that the proof alleged for all these is absolutely none at all, then is revelation overturned. But were it allowed that the proof of any one or all of them is lower than is allowed, yet whilst any proof of them remains, revelation will stand upon much the same foot it does at present, as to all the purposes of life and practice, and ought to have the like influence upon our behaviour.

3 From the foregoing observations, too, it will follow, and those who will thoroughly examine into revelation will find it worth remarking, that there are several ways of arguing, which, though just with regard to other writings, are not applicable to Scripture, at least not to the prophetic parts of it. We cannot argue, for instance, that this cannot be the sense or intent of such a passage of Scripture; for if it had, it would have been expressed more plainly, or have been represented under a more apt figure or hieroglyphic

* Page 193.

yet we may justly argue thus, with respect to common books.[5] And the reason of this difference is very evident; that in Scripture we are not competent judges, as we are in common books, how plainly it were to have been expected, what is the true sense should have been expressed, or under how apt an image figured. The only question is, what appearance there is that this is the sense; and scarce at all how much more determinately or accurately it might have been expressed or figured.

"But is it not self-evident that internal improbabilities of all kinds weaken external probable proof?" Doubtless. But to what practical purpose can this be alleged here, when it has been proved before,[6] that real internal improbabilities, which rise even to moral certainty, are overcome by the most ordinary testimony; and when it now has been made appear, that we scarce know what are improbabilities, as to the matter we are here considering, as it will further appear from what follows.

For though from the observations above made it is manifest that we are not in any sort competent judges, what supernatural instructions were to have been expected; and though it is self-evident that the objections of an incompetent judgment must be frivolous; yet it may be proper to

[5] [We must interpret Scripture, its announcements and disclosures, in accordance with what it professes to be—an inspired volume designed to set forth the plan of salvation by Christ, and to bring men to God. So far as it is like other books it must be interpreted by the same laws as other books . . . but so far as it differs from other books, being inspired and intended for all time, we must give its phrases and intimations a plenary and spiritual significance. . . . If the writers of the Scriptures did not foresee all the truths which might be drawn from their words, God the Holy Spirit foresaw them; and the business of interpretation is to learn *his* purpose in what is revealed. To explain the inspired Scriptures, therefore, in all respects as if they were human compositions with no wider range, is to dishonour the Scriptures and injure the church. See *Advancement of Learning*, Works, ii. 308—311; *Bible Hand-book*, Rel. Tr. Soc. p. 355. A similar view may be seen in Benson's *Hulsean Lectures on Scripture Difficulties*.

Of course prophecies which require this plenary interpretation are less suited for evidence than those which are simple and clear.]

[6] P. 175.

go one step further and observe, that if men will be regard-
less of these things, and pretend to judge of the Scripture
by preconceived expectations, the analogy of Nature shows
beforehand, not only that it is highly credible they may, but
also probable that they will, imagine they have strong
objections against it, however really unexceptionable; for
so, prior to experience, they would think they had, against
the circumstances, and degrees, and the whole manner of
that instruction, which is afforded by the ordinary course of
I Nature. Were the instruction which God affords to brute
creatures by instincts and mere propensions, and to mankind
by these together with reason, matter of probable proof, and
not of certain observation; it would be rejected as incredible
in many instances of it, only upon account of the means by
which this instruction is given, the seeming disproportions,
the limitations, necessary conditions, and circumstances of
it. For instance, would it not have been thought highly
a improbable that men should have been so much more capable
of discovering, even to certainty, the general laws of matter,
and the magnitudes, paths, and revolutions of the heavenly
bodies, than the occasions and cures of distempers, and
many other things, in which human life seems so much more
nearly concerned, than in astronomy? How capricious and
irregular a way of information, would it be said, is that of
b *invention*, by means of which Nature instructs us in matters
of science, and in many things upon which the affairs of the
world greatly depend; that a man should by this faculty, be
made acquainted with a thing in an instant, when, perhaps,
he is thinking of somewhat else, which he has in vain been
searching after it may be for years. So likewise the imper-
fections attending the only method by which Nature enables
and directs us to communicate our thoughts to each other,
c are innumerable. Language is, in its very nature, inadequate,
ambiguous, liable to infinite abuse, even from negligence;
and so liable to it from design, that every man can deceive
and betray by it. And to mention but one instance more;
that brutes without reason should act in many respects
d with a sagacity and foresight vastly greater than what men
have in those respects, would be thought impossible. Yet
it is certain they do act with such superior foresight,
2 whether it be their own indeed is another question. From

these things it is highly credible beforehand, that upon supposition God should afford men some additional instruction by revelation, it would be with circumstances, in manners, degrees, and respects, which we should be apt to fancy we had great objections against the credibility of. Nor are the objections against the Scripture, nor against Christianity in general, at all more or greater than the analogy of Nature would beforehand—not perhaps give ground to expect; for this analogy may not be sufficient, in some cases, to ground an expectation upon; but no more nor greater than analogy would show it, beforehand, to be supposable and credible, that there might seem to lie against revelation.

By applying these general observations to a particular objection it will be more distinctly seen how they are applicable to others of the like kind; and indeed to almost all objections against Christianity, as distinguished from objections against its evidence. It appears from Scripture, that as it was not unusual in the apostolic age, for persons, upon their conversion to Christianity, to be endued with miraculous gifts;[7] so, some of those persons exercised these gifts in a strangely irregular and disorderly manner; and this is made an objection against their being really miraculous. Now the foregoing observations quite remove this objection, how considerable soever it may appear at first sight. For, consider a person endued with any of these gifts; for instance, that of tongues; it is to be supposed that he had the same power over this miraculous gift, as he would have had over it, had it been the effect of habit, of study and use, as it ordinarily is; or the same power over it, as he had over any other natural endowment. Consequently, he would use it in the same manner he did any other; either regularly and upon proper occasions only, or irregularly and upon improper ones; according to his sense of decency and his character of prudence. Where then is the objection? Why, if this miraculous power was indeed given to the world to propagate Christianity, and attest the truth of it, we might, it seems, have expected that other sort of persons should have been chosen to be invested with it, or that these should

[7] [The allusion here is to 1 Cor. xii. 1—11, where the abuse of the gift of tongues is rebuked.]

at the same time have been endued with prudence, or that
b they should have been continually restrained and directed
in the exercise of it, *i. e.*, that God should have miraculously
interposed, if at all, in a different manner or higher degree.
But from the observations made above, it is undeniably
evident, that we are not judges in what degrees and manners
it were to have been expected he should miraculously interpose; upon supposition of his doing it in some degree
and manner. Nor, in the natural course of Providence, are
superior gifts of memory, eloquence, knowledge, and other
talents of great influence, conferred only on persons of
prudence and decency, or such as are disposed to make the
properest use of them. Nor is the instruction and admonition naturally afforded us for the conduct of life, particularly in our education, commonly given in a manner the
most suited to recommend it; but often with circumstances
apt to prejudice us against such instruction.

F One might go on to add that there is a great resemblance
between the light of Nature and of revelation in several other
a respects. Practical Christianity, or that faith and behaviour
which renders a man a Christian, is a plain and obvious
thing; like the common rules of conduct, with respect to
our ordinary temporal affairs. The more distinct and particular knowledge of those things, the study of which the
b apostle calls *going on unto perfection*,[a] and of the prophetic
parts of revelation, like many parts of natural and even civil
knowledge, may require very exact thought, and careful
consideration. The hinderances too, of natural and of supernatural light and knowledge, have been of the same
c kind. And as it is owned the whole scheme of Scripture is
not yet understood; so, if it ever comes to be understood,

[a] Heb. vi. 1. [A most accurate description of the only "development" which Protestantism can allow. There may be passages in the Bible whose full meaning is not yet discovered, and which are reserved, as Boyle expressed it, "to quell some future heresy, or resolve some yet unformed doubt, or confound some error that hath not yet a name," or to reward, as Butler would have said, yet more diligent research. But we are to look for no fresh revelation. Our insight will be not into new systems of truth, but into the clear yet profound depths of the meaning of the old.]

before the *restitution of all things*,[9] and without miraculous interpositions, it must be in the same way as natural knowledge is come at; by the continuance and progress of learning and of liberty, and by particular persons attending to, comparing, and pursuing, intimations scattered up and down it, which are overlooked and disregarded by the generality of the world. For this is the way in which all improvements are made; by thoughtful men's tracing on obscure hints as it were dropped us by Nature accidentally, or which seem to come into our minds by chance. Nor is it at all incredible, that a book which has been so long in the possession of mankind should contain many truths as yet undiscovered. For all the same phenomena and the same faculties of investigation, from which such great discoveries in natural knowledge have been made in the present and last age, were equally in the possession of mankind several thousand years before. And possibly it might be intended that events as they come to pass should open and ascertain the meaning of several parts of Scripture.

It may be objected that this analogy fails in a material respect; for that natural knowledge is of little or no consequence. But I have been speaking of the general instruction which Nature does or does not afford us. And besides, some parts of natural knowledge, in the more common restrained sense of the words, are of the greatest consequence to the ease and convenience of life. But suppose the analogy did, as it does not, fail in this respect, yet it might be abundantly supplied from the whole constitution and course of Nature, which shows that God does not dispense his gifts according to our notions of the advantage and consequence they would be of to us. And this in general, with his method of dispensing knowledge in particular, would together make out an analogy full to the point before us.

But it may be objected still further and more generally; "The Scripture represents the world as in a state of ruin, and Christianity as an expedient to recover it, to help in these respects where Nature fails; in particular, to supply the deficiencies of natural light. Is it credible then, that so many ages should have been let pass, before a matter of

[9] Acts iii. 21

such a sort, of so great and so general importance, was made known to mankind; and then that it should be made known to so small a part of them? Is it conceivable, that this supply should be so very deficient, should have the like obscurity and doubtfulness, be liable to the like perversions, in short, lie open to all the like objections, as the light of Nature itself?"[10] Without determining how far this in fact is so, I answer, it is by no means incredible that it might be so if the light of Nature and of revelation be from the same hand. Men are naturally liable to diseases, for which God, in his good providence, has provided natural remedies.[11] But remedies existing in Nature have been unknown to mankind for many ages; are known but to few now; probably many valuable ones are not known yet. Great has been and is the obscurity and difficulty, in the nature and application of them. Circumstances seem often to make them very improper, where they are absolutely necessary. It is after long labour and study, and many unsuccessful endeavours, that they are brought to be as useful as they are; after high contempt and absolute rejection of the most useful we have; and after disputes and doubts which have seemed to be endless. The best remedies too, when unskilfully, much more if dishonestly applied, may produce new diseases, and with the rightest application the success of them is often doubtful. In many cases they are not at all effectual; where they are, it is often very slowly; and the application of them and the necessary regimen accompanying it, is not uncommonly so disagreeable that some will not submit to them; and satisfy themselves with the excuse, that if they would, it is not certain whether it would be successful. And many persons who labour under diseases for which there are known natural remedies, are not so happy as to be always, if ever, in the way of them. In a word, the remedies which Nature has provided for diseases are neither certain, perfect, nor universal. And indeed the same principles of arguing which would lead us to conclude that they must be so, would lead us likewise to conclude that there could be no occasion for them, *i. e.* that there could be no diseases at all. And therefore our experience that there are diseases shows, that it is

[10] Chap. vi. [11] See chap. v

credible beforehand, upon supposition Nature has provided remedies for them, that these remedies may be, as by experience we find they are, not certain, nor perfect, nor universal; because it shows that the principles upon which we should expect the contrary are fallacious.

And now, what is the just consequence from all these things? Not that reason is no judge of what is offered to us as being of Divine revelation. For this would be to infer, that we are unable to judge of anything, because we are unable to judge of all things. Reason can, and it ought to judge, not only of the meaning but also of the morality and the evidence of revelation. First, it is the province of reason to judge of the morality of the Scripture, *i. e.* not whether it contains things different from what we should have expected from a wise, just, and good Being; for objections from hence have been now obviated; but whether it contains things plainly contradictory to wisdom, justice, or goodness; to what the light of Nature teaches us of God. And I know nothing of this sort objected against Scripture, excepting such objections as are formed upon suppositions, which would equally conclude, that the constitution of Nature is contradictory to wisdom, justice, or goodness; which most certainly it is not. Indeed, there are some particular precepts in Scripture given to particular persons requiring actions, which would be immoral and vicious, were it not for such precepts.[12] But it is easy to see, that all these are of such a kind, as that the precept changes the whole nature of the case and of the action, and both constitutes and shows that not to be unjust or immoral, which, prior to the precept, must have appeared and really have been so; which may well be, since none of these precepts are contrary to immutable morality. If it were commanded to cultivate the principles and act from the spirit of treachery, ingratitude, cruelty; the command would not alter the nature of the case or of the action, in any of these

[12] [Such is the extermination of the Canaanites. "In all those Instances," says Dr. Chalmers, "the Israelites were but the executioners of a sentence; and to charge immorality on the procedure is to confound the administrative acts of a government with its laws."—*Lectures*, p. 57. To make similar acts commendable, they must be done under similar authority.]

instances. But it is quite otherwise in precepts which require only the doing an external action; for instance, taking away the property or life of any. For men have no right to either life or property, but what arises solely from the grant of God; when this grant is revoked, they cease to have any right at all in either; and when this revocation is made known, as surely it is possible it may be, it must cease to be unjust to deprive them of either. And though a course of external acts, which without command would be immoral, must make an immoral habit; yet a few detached commands have no such natural tendency. I thought proper to say thus much of the few Scripture precepts, which require, not vicious actions, but actions which would have been vicious had it not been for such precepts; because they are sometimes weakly urged as immoral, and great weight is laid upon objections drawn from them. But to me there seems no difficulty at all in these precepts, but what arises from their being offences, *i. e.* from their being liable to be perverted, as indeed they are, by wicked designing men, to serve the most horrid purposes, and perhaps to mislead the weak and enthusiastic. And objections from this head are not objections against revelation, but against the whole notion of religion as a trial, and against the general constitution of Nature. Secondly. Reason is able to judge, and must, of the
c evidence of revelation, and of the objections urged against that evidence, which shall be the subject of a following chapter.[13]

2 But the consequence of the foregoing observations is, that the question upon which the truth of Christianity depends is scarce at all, what objections there are against its scheme, since there are none against the morality of it; but *what objections there are against its evidence*; or, *what proof there remains of it, after due allowances made for the objections against that proof*; because it has been shown that the *objections against Christianity as distinguished from objections against its evidence are frivolous*. For surely very little weight, if any at all, is to be laid upon a way of arguing and objecting, which, when applied to the general constitution of Nature, experience shows not to be conclusive; and such I

[13] Chap. vii.

think is the whole way of objecting treated of throughout this chapter. It is resolvable into principles, and goes upon suppositions, which mislead us to think that the Author of Nature would not act as we experience he does, or would act, in such and such cases as we experience he does not in like cases. But the unreasonableness of this way of objecting will appear yet more evidently from hence, that the chief things thus objected against are justified, as shall be further shown[14], by distinct, particular, and full analogies, in the constitution and course of Nature.

But it is to be remembered that as frivolous as objections of the foregoing sort against revelation are, yet, when a supposed revelation is more consistent with itself, and has a more general and uniform tendency to promote virtue, than, all circumstances considered, could have been expected from enthusiasm and political views; this is a presumptive proof of its not proceeding from them, and so of its truth; because we are competent judges, what might have been expected from enthusiasm and political views.[15]

[14] Chap. iv. latter part, and v. vi.

[15] [This suggestive sentence is the principle on which all internal evidence on the truth of Scripture doctrines rests. What perfect wisdom will reveal, man cannot foresee; but what fraud and enthusiasm reveal, man knows. Though, therefore, we are not competent to decide what Scripture ought to teach, we are competent to decide on the alternative, and affirm whether what is taught in Scripture is what might be looked for from enthusiasts and impostors.—See *Lessons on the Evidences* (by Archbishop Whately).

This chapter Dr. Chalmers justly deems one of the most important in the book. "The spirit evinced in it is identical with that of the experimental or Baconian philosophy: a spirit in the first instance of the utmost hardihood in resolutely maintaining to be true all that accords with the findings of experience; and a spirit, in the second instance, of the utmost humility in that sentiment of diffidence wherewith it regards all the fancies of presumptuous, however plausible, speculation."]

CHAPTER IV.

OF CHRISTIANITY, CONSIDERED AS A SCHEME OR CONSTITUTION, IMPERFECTLY COMPREHENDED.[1]

[It may be true, as shown (chap. iii.), that we are imperfect judges of the Christian system. Still are the things objected to really wise and good? And, before proceeding to notice these things in detail, there is a general argument, similar to the one given in Part I. chap. vii., which needs to be remembered—viz., that Christianity is a scheme, like God's natural government, imperfectly comprehended; that the whole is credibly consistent with goodness, and illustrative of it; and that, if we knew all, it would appear to be so.

A As *moral* government, so *Christian*, is an incomprehensible scheme.

1 It is a scheme, under the plan of Providence, seeking the final perfection of man; beginning with our recovery, and involving the office of a Messiah, a sanctifying Spirit, invisible government over the Church, a gradual preparation of the redeemed for heaven, and a final judgment.

2 And it is a scheme imperfectly comprehended; a mystery of godliness; the things revealed ever running up into mysteries, and a large part of it still undisclosed.

B Note two important particular analogies between the two:

1 As the natural government of God, so Christianity uses, to accomplish ends, means, undesirable it may be, or "foolish," yet, in Nature, none the less appropriate to secure the desired result.

2 As the natural government of God, so Christianity is carried out by general laws.

a That God's natural government is so carried on we conclude from the many cases in which we can trace those laws. "By analogy" we apply to all what we see to be true of a part. So,

[1] [The aphorisms of three very different men are worth quoting in connexion with this chapter. "Either nothing is mysterious," says Dr. Thomas Brown, "or everything is." "The last step of reason," says Pascal, "is to know that there is an infinitude of things which surpass it." "Of the dark parts of revelation," says Warburton, "there are two sorts: one which may be cleared up by the studious application of well-employed talents; the other, which will always reside within the shadow of God's throne, where it would be impiety to intrude." A Christianity without mystery is a shallow faith, as unphilosophical as it is unscriptural.]

b We may conclude that Christianity is carried on by general laws, even though, in particular cases, we see only the fact, and not the law, as in miracles. Hence, though some exigencies may be met by miracles, yet every exigency may not be so met; a reason for miraculous interposition in some cases, and not in all.

c Hence conclude that, as Christianity is a scheme with means and general laws, it is liable to objections from apparent deficiencies and irregularities, which would cease if the whole case were known.

D Objections to a Christian scheme, as a fact, have been met (chap. iii.). Objections against its consistency with wisdom and goodness have been already met in this chapter. Objections to particular parts of the scheme may be met by particular analogies in Nature. In the following chapter other parts are taken up. There it is intended to notice a particular objection to the scheme as a whole, involving especially a use of intricate means for the salvation of the world. No just objection to Christianity can hence arise; for

1 In Nature and in Providence (the seasons, the progress of nations, for example,) means equally intricate and tedious are employed, so that the objection applies equally to Nature and to religion. And, further,

2 *We* distinguish means and ends; while, in fact, the distinction may be absurd. And certainly, with God, means may be as important a part of the process as the end itself.

These are expanded.]

IT hath been now shown,[2] that the analogy of Nature renders it highly credible beforehand, that supposing a revelation to be made it must contain many things very different from what we should have expected, and such as appear open to great objections; and that this observation, in good measure, takes off the force of those objections, or rather precludes them. But it may be alleged that this is a very partial answer to such objections, or a very unsatisfactory way of obviating them; because it doth not show at all, that the things objected against can be wise, just, and good; much less that it is credible they are so. It will, therefore, be proper to show this distinctly, by applying to these objec-

[2] In the foregoing chapter.

tions against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of Christianity, the answer above[3] given to the like objections against the constitutions of Nature; before we consider the particular analogies in the latter, to the particular things objected against in the former. Now that which affords a sufficient answer to objections against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of the constitution of Nature, is its being a constitution, a system or scheme, imperfectly comprehended, a scheme in which means are made use of to accomplish ends, and which is carried on by general laws. For from these things it has been proved, not only to be possible, but also to be credible, that those things which are objected against may be consistent with wisdom, justice, and goodness, nay may be instances of them; and even that the constitution and government of Nature may be perfect in the highest possible degree. If Christianity then be a scheme, and of the like kind; it is evident, the like objections against it must admit of the like answer. And,—

A 1. Christianity is a scheme quite beyond our comprehension. The moral government of God is exercised, by gradually conducting things so in the course of his providence, that every one at length and upon the whole, shall receive according to his deserts; and neither fraud nor
1 violence, but truth and right, shall finally prevail. Christianity is a particular scheme under this general plan of Providence, and a part of it, conducive to its completion, with regard to mankind; consisting itself also of various parts, and a mysterious economy which has been carrying on from the time the world came into its present wretched state, and is still carrying on for its recovery, by a Divine person, the Messiah; who is to *gather together in one the children of God that are scattered abroad*,[4] and establish *an everlasting kingdom, wherein dwelleth righteousness.*[5] And in order to it, after various manifestations of things relating to this great and general scheme of providence, through a succession of many ages; (for *the Spirit of Christ which was in the prophets, testified beforehand his sufferings, and the glory that should follow; unto whom it was revealed, that not unto them-*

[3] Part I. ch. vii. to which this all along refers.

[4] John xi. 52. 2 Pet. iii. 13.

selves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported unto us by them that have preached the gospel; which things the angels desire to look into;[6]) after various dispensations, looking forward, and preparatory to this final salvation; *in the fulness of time*, when infinite wisdom thought fit; He, *being in the form of God,—made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men; and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient to death, even the death of the cross; wherefore God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name; that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in the earth, and things under the earth; and that every tongue should confess, that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*[7] Parts likewise of this economy are the miraculous mission of the Holy Ghost, and his ordinary assistances given to good men;[8] the invisible government, which Christ

[6] 1 Pet. i. 11, 12. [7] Phil. ii. [6, 11].

[8] ["The Holy Spirit given to good men" is one of the phrases in this volume to which, as a full statement of truth, exception is justly taken. It suggests the idea that his aid is given only to help on those who have already begun to help themselves; whereas the teaching of Scripture is, that to this Agent men owe their commencement (conversion) as well as their progress in holiness. It is his office not merely to reform, but to renew. . . . In the *first* part of this treatise Butler's phraseology on these topics is, perhaps, defensible (see Chap. v. note 11); but here we naturally look for expositions of truth more in accordance with the fulness and unction of the gospel. Of the aid of the Spirit in subduing our passions, and strengthening our virtue, we read much; but of his great work, in awakening men who sleep, in giving life to the dead in sin, in enlightening dark minds, in subduing proud and self-righteous hearts, and so creating all things new, we read little: an omission the more to be regretted, as this part of his office is the most characteristic of the gospel, and essential to an appreciation of the rest.

There is a sense, however, of the words of the text as important as it is just: strictly true, though not the whole truth: "the Holy Spirit is given to the good:" He descends in the largest measure on those who most warmly prize and most faithfully use his influences. "To him that hath is given"—a rule in complete harmony with those laws of habit to which Butler has already referred.]

at present exercises over his church; that which he himself refers to in these words; *In my Father's house are many mansions—I go to prepare a place for you*:[9] and his future return to *judge the world in righteousness*, and completely re-establish the kingdom of God. *For the Father judgeth no man; but hath committed all judgment unto the Son; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.*[10] *All power is given unto him in heaven and in earth.*[11] *And he must reign, till he hath put all enemies under his feet. Then cometh the end, when he shall have delivered up the kingdom to God, even the Father; when he shall have put down all rule, and all authority and power. And when all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all.*[12] Now little, surely, need be said to show that this system or scheme of
2 things is but imperfectly comprehended by us. The Scripture expressly asserts it to be so. And indeed one cannot read a passage relating to this *great mystery of godliness*,[13] but what immediately runs up into something which shows us our ignorance in it, as everything in Nature shows us our ignorance in the constitution of Nature. And whoever will seriously consider that part of the Christian scheme, which is revealed in Scripture, will find so much more unrevealed, as will convince him that to all the purposes of judging and objecting, we know as little of it as of the constitution of Nature. Our ignorance, therefore, is as much an answer to our objections against the perfection of one as against the perfection of the other.[14]

II. It is obvious, too, that in the Christian dispensation, as much as in the natural scheme of things, means are made use of to accomplish ends. And the observation of this furnishes us with the same answer, to objections against the perfection of Christianity, as to objections of the like kind, against the constitution of Nature. It shows the credibility that the things objected against, how *foolish*[15] soever they appear to men, may be the very best means of accomplishing

[9] John xiv. 2.
[10] John v. 22, 23.
[11] Matt. xxviii. 18.
[12] 1 Cor. xv. [25, 28.]
[13] 1 Tim. iii. 16.
[14] P. 182, etc.
[15] 1 Cor. i.

t ends. And their appearing *foolishness* is no against this, in a scheme so greatly beyond our on.[16]

redibility, that the Christian dispensation may 2
ll along carried on by general laws,[17] no less urse of Nature may require to be more distinctly Consider then, upon what ground it is we say, a
ole common course of Nature is carried on ac- general fore-ordained laws. We know, indeed, he general laws of matter; and a great part of behaviour of living agents is reducible to general we know in a manner nothing, by what laws tempests, earthquakes, famine, pestilence, be- struments of destruction to mankind. And the ich persons born into the world at such a time are of such capacities, geniuses, tempers; the ich thoughts come into our mind in a multitude d by which innumerable things happen, of the fluence upon the affairs and state of the world; are so wholly unknown to us, that we call the h come to pass by them, accidental; though all men know certainly that there cannot in reality thing as chance, and conclude that the things o this appearance are the result of general laws, reduced into them. It is then but an exceeding and in but a very few respects, that we can trace ural course of things before us, to general laws. only from analogy that we conclude the whole of pable of being reduced into them; only from our t part is so. It is from our finding that the course , in some respects and so far, goes on by general we conclude this of the rest.[18] And if that be a d for such a conclusion, it is a just ground also, onclude, yet to apprehend, to render it supposable
ble, which is sufficient for answering objections, s miraculous interpositions may have been all along anner, by *general* laws of wisdom. Thus, that

, 136. [17] P. 138, 139.
erschel's 'Preliminary Discourse on the Study of Natural , ch. iii

miraculous powers should be exerted at such times, upon such occasions, in such degrees and manners, and with regard to such persons rather than others, that the affairs of the world, being permitted to go on in their natural course so far, should, just at such a point, have a new direction given them by miraculous interpositions; that these interpositions should be exactly in such degrees and respects only; all this may have been by general laws. These laws are unknown indeed to us; but no more unknown, than the laws from whence it is, that some die as soon as they are born and others live to extreme old age, that one man is so superior to another in understanding, with innumerable more things which, as was before observed, we cannot reduce to any laws or rules at all, though it is taken for granted, they are as much reducible to general ones as gravitation. Now, if the revealed dispensations of Providence, and miraculous interpositions, be by general laws, as well as God's ordinary government in the course of Nature, made known by reason and experience; there is no more reason to expect that every exigence, as it arises, should be provided for by these general laws of miraculous interpositions, than that every exigence in Nature should by the general laws of Nature; yet there might be wise and good reasons that miraculous interpositions should be by general laws, and that these laws should not be broken in upon, or deviated from by other miracles.

CONCL. C Upon the whole then, the appearance of deficiencies and irregularities in Nature is owing to its being a scheme but in part made known, and of such a certain particular kind in other respects. Now we see no more reason why the frame and course of Nature should be such a scheme, than why Christianity should. And that the former is such a scheme renders it credible, that the latter, upon supposition of its truth, may be so too. And as it is manifest that Christianity is a scheme revealed but in part, and a scheme in which means are made use of to accomplish ends, like to that of Nature; so the credibility that it may have been all along carried on by general laws, no less than the course of Nature, has been distinctly proved. And from all this it is beforehand credible that there might, I think probable that there would, be the like appearance of deficiencies and

irregularities in Christianity as in Nature; *i. e.*, that Christianity would be liable to the like objections as the frame of Nature. And these objections are answered by these observations concerning Christianity; as the like objections against the frame of Nature are answered by the like observations concerning the frame of Nature.

The objections against Christianity, considered as a matter of fact,[19] having in general been obviated in the preceding chapter, and the same, considered as made against the wisdom and goodness of it having been obviated in this, the next thing according to the method proposed is to show, that the principal objections in particular against Christianity may be answered by particular and full analogies in Nature. And as one of them is made against the whole scheme of it together, as just now described, I choose to consider it here,
rather than in a distinct chapter by itself. The thing objected D
against this scheme of the gospel is, "that it seems to suppose God was reduced to the necessity of a long series of intricate means in order to accomplish his ends, the recovery and salvation of the world: in like sort as men, for want of understanding or power, not being able to come at their ends directly, are forced to go round-about ways, and make use of many perplexed contrivances to arrive at them." Now everything which we see shows the folly of this, considered as an objection against the truth of Christianity. For according to our manner of conception God makes use of variety of
means, what we often think tedious ones, in the natural 1
course of providence, for the accomplishment of all his ends. Indeed it is certain there is somewhat in this matter quite beyond our comprehension: but the mystery is as great in Nature as in Christianity. We know what we ourselves aim at, as final ends; and what courses we take, merely as means conducing to those ends. But we are greatly ignorant how far things are considered by the Author of Nature,
under the single notion of means and ends; so as that it may 2
be said this is merely an end, and that merely means, in his regard. And whether there be not some peculiar absurdity in our very manner of conception concerning this matter,

[19] P. 131, etc.

somewhat contradictory arising from our extremely imperfect views of things, it is impossible to say. However, thus much is manifest, that the whole natural world and government of it is a scheme or system; not a fixed, but a progressive one: a scheme in which the operation of various means takes up a great length of time before the ends they tend to can be attained. The change of seasons, the ripening of the fruits of the earth, the very history of a flower, is an instance of this: and so is human life. Thus vegetable bodies, and those of animals, though possibly formed at once, yet grow up by degrees to a mature state. And thus rational agents, who animate these latter bodies, are naturally directed to form each his own manners and character, by the gradual gaining of knowledge and experience, and by a long course of action. Our existence is not only successive, as it must be of necessity; but one state of our life and being is appointed by God to be a preparation for another; and that, to be the means of attaining to another succeeding one: infancy to childhood; childhood to youth; youth to mature age. Men are impatient, and for precipitating things: but the Author of Nature appears deliberate throughout his operations, accomplishing his natural ends by slow successive steps.[20] And there is a plan of things beforehand laid out, which, from the nature of it, requires various systems of means, as well as length of time, in order to the carrying on its several parts into execution. Thus in the daily course of natural providence God operates in the very same manner, as in the dispensation of Christianity; making one thing subservient to another; this, to somewhat further; and so on, through a progressive series of means, which extend, both

[20] [Professor Fitzgerald quotes here an appropriate parallel passage from Guizot. "The ways of Providence are not confined within narrow limits; he hurries not himself to display to-day the consequences of the principle which he yesterday laid down; he will draw it out in the lapse of ages, when the hour is come; and even according to our reasoning, logic is not the less sure because it is slow. Providence is unconcerned as to time; his march (if I may be allowed the simile) is like that of the fabulous deities of Homer through space; he takes a step and ages have elapsed."—*Lectures on Civilization in Europe,* Lect. 1.]

backward and forward, beyond our utmost view.[21] Of this manner of operation, everything we see in the course of Nature is as much an instance as any part of the Christian dispensation.

CHAPTER V.

OF THE PARTICULAR SYSTEM OF CHRISTIANITY; THE APPOINTMENT OF A MEDIATOR, AND THE REDEMPTION OF THE WORLD BY HIM.

[The mediation of Christ has been greatly objected to, but without reason; for

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[21] [The reasonings of this chapter throw light on the proper method of studying the character and government of God. "Our philosophers," says Dr. Powell, . . . "make mistakes more shameful and dangerous when they judge of the Divine economy . . . from preconceived notions of fitness and propriety, of justice and impartiality, which they boldly apply to the Supreme Being. He cannot, they tell us, act in this manner, it would be contrary to his wisdom; nor in that, it would be inconsistent with his justice: one kind or degree of happiness he must be disposed to grant, and this his creatures have a right to demand. But while they throw out those peremptory assertions . . . they show themselves to be unacquainted with the fundamental rules of their own science, and with the origin of all its late improvements.. . . . True philosophy would have taught them to proceed the other way; to begin with observing the present constitution of the world; with considering attentively how God has made us, and in what circumstances placed us; and then to form a sure judgment, from what he has done, what it is agreeable to infinite wisdom and the other Divine perfections that he would do. They might thus have learned the invisible things of God from those things which are clearly seen; the things which are not yet accomplished from those which are."—*On the Use and Abuse of Philosophy in the Study of Religion. Powell's Discourses*, iii. These remarks are most applicable to the study of Scripture. "What readest thou?" ought to be the first question in theology, as "What findest thou?" is the first question in science. *A priori* presumptions become neither the spirit of the Baconian philosophy, nor the humility of the Christian. A sound philosophy is the result of the same process of *docile* inquiry as a sound faith.]

A The analogy of Nature supplies no presumption against the general notion of mediation, but the contrary:

For upon the instrumentality or mediation of others we depend for our birth and nature; for happiness and misery.

B The moral government of God, which mediation presupposes, and which religion tells us extends into another life, is natural.

1 Present punishment, one effect of moral government, is certainly natural, ever following vice; and, in the same way, future punishment may naturally follow vice.

2 Nor need any object that, upon this supposition, justice is taken out of God's hand, and given to Nature; for

a It is God who does what Nature is said to do; and

b In Scripture natural punishments are ascribed to God, and yet are deemed natural, as distinguished from miraculous; and

c By "natural" is meant, not arbitrary, but just and reasonable; such, moreover, as are in accordance with general laws.

C All the present penal consequences of vice are not always inflicted, but a provision is made to prevent them, and so may some of the future consequences be prevented.

1 Men may think that it would have been better for evil not to have existed; still it does exist, though God often provides remedies even for such evils as are penal.

2 Such provision might have been withheld; an arrangement severe, perhaps, but not unjust.

3 In fact, however, there is such a provision, and analogously we may hope that it will extend into the future, so that the consequences of vice may not follow universally in all cases.

4 Some may be surprised that this is stated as a supposition only But if the consequences of irregularities even (not vice) be so serious, and of vice often extreme misery and death, what may we not fear that the consequences of irreligion will be, looking at the disorder it introduces?

However, some of the future penal consequences of sin may be prevented.

D We have no reason, however, to suppose that these consequences can be prevented by anything we can do; for

1 We know not what reasons for punishment may exist, or what the natural consequences of vice are, and so cannot tell what can prevent them.

2 Nature, moreover, leads to the conclusion that we cannot prevent them; for ruin is often the consequence of vice, nor can repentance repair the evil. Our ability to repair it is often weakened; and, even if not, we have to depend on others.

Our notions of government are all against the supposition that repentance will prevent the future painful consequences of vice.

This conclusion is favoured by the general sense of mankind, who add sacrifices to their repentance.

The general doctrine of revelation on these questions confirms these views. It confirms our fears, and tells us of the future consequences of vice. It supposes a state of ruin (a supposition not contrary to reason); teaches us that we cannot be pardoned through repentance alone, yet affirms that pardon is possible, therein revealing God's goodness in preventing punishment and bestowing salvation through the suffering of another, all which is consistent with what we already know of God; and if any object

1 That this doctrine is inconsistent with goodness; answer, that even the supposition that the whole creation had perished would not be inconsistent with it, therefore much less is this. Or

2 That it presupposes a degraded state; answer,

a That Christianity does not put us into this state.

b That the fact we are in this state is confirmed by all experience (the best complain, and most grow worse with age); and

c How we are so, and why, may be difficult to explain; yet the Scripture account is analogous to much around us, and to our recovery by Christ.

These considerations show that mediation generally is analogous to what we see in Nature; nor can any valid objection be taken to the particular manner in which Christ interposed.

1 The doctrine of Scripture is in general, that Christ came to teach, and then to die for us. This last fact, *especially* set forth in the law, and clearly revealed in the gospel.

2 More particularly he appeared

a As a Prophet; teaching the law of Nature, purely, authoritatively, with new light, and adding many truths peculiar to himself, besides leaving us his own example.

b As King; ruling in his Church; the number of which he is about to perfect, and to receive to glory.

c As Priest; offering up himself a sacrifice, universal, efficacious, and final.

Men may ask how this sacrifice is availing. But this question is not answered; our conjectures are, therefore, uncertain. Scripture teaches that he makes repentance acceptable (*see* Note), and our wisdom is to accept the blessing without curiously inquiring how it effects its end.

6 Hence, since we are ignorant of much that mediation involves, objections against the scheme of mediation generally, and against the Scriptural scheme, are futile; whether against

1 The necessity of it.

2 The nature, parts, and duties of the Mediator's office, unless such objections are founded upon the unfitness of the means to the end proposed.

3 Of unfit means, the suffering of Christ, as innocent for guilty, is supposed to be an example; but the answer is obvious:

a In the constitution of Nature men thus suffer.

b Against that constitution the argument is still stronger, for Christ suffered *voluntarily*.

c In the end all (Christ included) will be treated according to their deserts.

d Such suffering is found, in fact, to contribute largely to the relief of man; and

e The reasonableness of the doctrine, and its fitness for the end, is seen in its natural tendency to vindicate God's laws, and deter men from sin.

f The objection, moreover, really means that it is not fit, because we do not see it to be so.

4 Such objections are all unreasonable, for they are based upon our ignorance; that is, the reason of the arrangement is not told us, and yet we object to it; they are most unreasonable, because, so far as we can judge, it is analogous to natural facts; besides, it is part of the doctrine in which we are not actively concerned; further

5 From Scripture and from analogy we learn that, while *our duty* is made clear, we are not to expect the same clearness in what Scripture tells us of the Divine conduct.

a In Nature we gather rules of life by experience. Of the vast scheme of Providence we know little; so,

b Analogously in Scripture, the things not understood relate to God's part, not to human duty. In both there is much we can understand; but our duties are always clear, whether moral or positive, and the reasons for them; and, even if they were not, the fact that they are commanded is sufficient to make them binding.]

There is not, I think, anything relating to Christianity which has been more objected against than the mediation of Christ, in some or other of its parts. Yet, upon thorough consideration, there seems nothing less justly liable to it. For,

I. The whole analogy of Nature removes all imagined presumption against the general notion of *a Mediator between God and man*.[1] For we find all living creatures are brought into the world, and their life in infancy is preserved, by the instrumentality of others: and every satisfaction of it, some way or other, is bestowed by the like means. So that the visible government, which God exercises over the world, is by the instrumentality and mediation of others. And how far his invisible government be or be not so, it is impossible to determine at all by reason. And the supposition that part of it is so appears, to say the least, altogether as credible as the contrary. There is then no sort of objection, from the light of Nature, against the general notion of a mediator between God and man, considered as a doctrine of Christianity, or as an appointment in this dispensation: since we find by experience that God does appoint mediators to be the instruments of good and evil to us; the instruments of his justice and his mercy. And the objection here referred to is urged, not against mediation in that high, eminent, and peculiar sense in which Christ is our mediator, but absolutely against the whole notion itself of a mediator at all. A

II. As we must suppose that the world is under the proper moral government of God, or in a state of religion, before we can enter into consideration of the revealed doctrine concerning the redemption of it by Christ, so that supposition is here to be distinctly taken notice of. Now the Divine moral government which religion teaches us implies, that the consequence of vice shall be misery, in some future state, by the righteous judgment of God. That such consequent punishment shall take effect by his appointment, is necessarily implied. But, as it is not in any sort to be supposed that we are made acquainted with all the ends or reasons, for which it is fit future punishments should be inflicted, or why God has appointed such and such consequent misery should follow vice; and as we are altogether in the dark how or in what manner it shall follow, by what immediate occasions, or by the instrumentality of what means; there is no absurdity in supposing it may follow in a way analogous to that, in which many miseries follow such and such courses of action at B 1

[1] 1 Tim. ii. 5.

present; poverty, sickness, infamy, untimely death by diseases, death from the hands of civil justice. There is no absurdity in supposing future punishment may follow wickedness of course, as we speak, or in the way of natural consequence from God's original constitution of the world; from the nature he has given us, and from the condition in which he places us; or in a like manner as a person rashly trifling upon a precipice, in the way of natural consequence, falls down; in the way of natural consequence, breaks his limbs, suppose; in the way of natural consequence of this, without help perishes.

2 Some good men may perhaps be offended with hearing it
spoken of as a supposable thing, that the future punishments
of wickedness may be in the way of natural consequence: as
if this were taking the execution of justice out of the hands
of God, and giving it to Nature. But they should remember,
that when things come to pass according to the course of
Nature, this does not hinder them from being his doing, who
a is the God of Nature: and that the Scripture ascribes those
punishments to Divine justice, which are known to be natural;
and which must be called so, when distinguished from such
b as are miraculous. But after all, this supposition, or rather
this way of speaking, is here made use of only by way of
illustration of the subject before us. For since it must be
admitted that the future punishment of wickedness is not a
c matter of arbitrary appointment, but of reason, equity and
justice; it comes, for aught I see, to the same thing, whether
it is supposed to be inflicted in a way analogous to that in
which the temporal punishments of vice and folly are inflicted,
or in any other way. And though there were a difference, it
is allowable, in the present case, to make this supposition,
plainly not an incredible one, that future punishment may
follow wickedness in the way of natural consequence, or according to some general laws of government already established in the universe.

3 III. Upon this supposition, or even without it, we may observe somewhat much to the present purpose, in the constitution of Nature or appointments of Providence; the provision which is made, that all the bad natural consequences of men's actions should not always actually follow, or that such bad consequences, as according to the settled course of

things would inevitably have followed, if not prevented, should, in certain degrees, be prevented. We are apt pre- 1
sumptuously to imagine that the world might have been so constituted, as that there would not have been any such thing as misery or evil. On the contrary, we find the Author of Nature permits it: but then he has provided reliefs, and in many cases perfect remedies for it, after some pains and difficulties; reliefs and remedies even for that evil which is the fruit of our own misconduct, and which, in the course of Nature, would have continued and ended in our destruction but for such remedies. And this is an instance both of severity and of indulgence in the constitution of Nature. Thus all the bad consequences now mentioned of a man's trifling upon a precipice might be prevented. And though all were not, yet some of them might, by proper interposition, if not rejected: by another's coming to the rash man's relief, with his own laying hold on that relief, in such sort as the case required. Persons may do a great deal themselves towards preventing the bad consequences of their follies: and more may be done by themselves, together with the assistance of others their fellow-creatures; which assistance Nature requires and prompts us to. This is the general constitution of the world. Now suppose it had been so constituted, that after such actions were done as were foreseen naturally to draw after them misery to the doer, it should
have been no more in human power to have prevented that 2
naturally consequent misery, in any instance, than it is in all; no one can say whether such a more severe constitution of things might not yet have been really good. But that, on
the contrary, provision is made by Nature that we may and 3
do, to so great degree, prevent the bad natural effects of our follies, this may be called mercy or compassion in the original constitution of the world: compassion, as distinguished from goodness in general. And the whole known constitution and course of things affording us instances of such compassion, it would be according to the analogy of Nature, to hope that, however ruinous the natural consequences of vice might be, from the general laws of God's government over the universe, yet provision might be made, possibly might have been originally made, for preventing those ruinous con-

sequences from inevitably following; at least from following universally, and in all cases.

Many, I am sensible, will wonder at finding this made a question, or spoken of as in any degree doubtful. The generality of mankind are so far from having that awful sense of things, which the present state of vice and misery and darkness seems to make but reasonable, that they have scarce any apprehension or thought at all about this matter, any way; and some serious persons may have spoken unadvisedly concerning it. But let us observe what we experience to be, and what, from the very constitution of Nature, cannot but be the consequences of irregular and disorderly behaviour, even of such rashness, wilfulness, neglects, as we scarce call vicious. Now it is natural to apprehend that the bad consequences of irregularity will be greater in proportion as the irregularity is so. And there is no comparison between these irregularities and the greater instances of vice, or a dissolute profligate disregard to all religion, if there be anything at all in religion. For consider what it is for creatures, moral agents, presumptuously to introduce that confusion and misery into the kingdom of God, which mankind have in fact introduced; to blaspheme the Sovereign Lord of all; to contemn his authority; to be injurious to the degree they are to their fellow-creatures, the creatures of God. Add that the effects of vice in the present world are often extreme misery, irretrievable ruin, and even death; and upon putting all this together it will appear, that as no one can say in what degree fatal the unprevented consequences of vice may be, according to the general rule of Divine government; so it is by no means intuitively certain how far these consequences could possibly, in the nature of the thing, be prevented consistently with the eternal rule of right, or with what is, in fact, the moral constitution of Nature. However, there would be large ground to hope that the universal government was not so severely strict, but that there was room for pardon, or for having those penal consequences prevented. Yet,

IV. There seems no probability that anything we could do would alone and of itself prevent them: prevent their following, or being inflicted. But one would think, at least,

it were impossible that the contrary should be thought
certain. For we are not acquainted with the whole of the
case. We are not informed of all the reasons, which render
it fit that future punishments should be inflicted: and 1
therefore cannot know, whether anything we could do
would make such an alteration, as to render it fit that they
should be remitted. We do not know what the whole
natural or appointed consequences of vice are; nor in what
way they would follow, if not prevented: and therefore can
in no sort say whether we could do anything which would
be sufficient to prevent them. Our ignorance being thus
manifest, let us recollect the analogy of Nature or Providence.
For, though this may be but a slight ground to raise a positive
opinion upon, in this matter; yet it is sufficient to answer
a mere arbitrary assertion, without any kind of evidence, 2
urged by way of objection against a doctrine, the proof of
which is not reason, but revelation. Consider then: people
ruin their fortunes by extravagance; they bring diseases
upon themselves by excess; they incur the penalties of civil
laws; and surely civil government is natural; will sorrow
for these follies past, and behaving well for the future, alone
and of itself prevent the natural consequences of them?
On the contrary, men's natural abilities of helping themselves
are often impaired: or if not, yet they are forced to be
beholden to the assistance of others, upon several accounts,
and in different ways; assistance which they would have had
no occasion for, had it not been for their misconduct; but
which, in the disadvantageous condition they have reduced
themselves to, is absolutely necessary to their recovery, and
retrieving their affairs. Now since this is our case, considering
ourselves merely as inhabitants of this world, and as
having a temporal interest here, under the natural government
of God, which however has a great deal moral in it;
why is it not supposable that this may be our case also, in
our more important capacity, as under his perfect moral
government, and having a more general and future interest
depending? If we have misbehaved in this higher capacity,
and rendered ourselves obnoxious to the future punishment,
which God has annexed to vice: it is plainly credible, that
behaving well for the time to come may be—not useless,
God forbid—but wholly insufficient, alone and of itself, to

prevent that punishment; or to put us in the condition, which we should have been in, had we preserved our innocence.

And though we ought to reason with all reverence, whenever we reason concerning the Divine conduct: yet it may be added, that it is clearly contrary to all our notions of
3 government, as well as to what is, in fact, the general constitution of Nature, to suppose, that doing well for the future should, in all cases, prevent all the judicial bad consequences of having done evil, or all the punishment annexed to disobedience. And we have manifestly nothing from whence to determine, in what degree, and in what cases, reformation would prevent this punishment, even supposing that it would in some. And though the efficacy of repentance itself alone, to prevent what mankind had rendered themselves obnoxious to, and recover what they had forfeited, is now insisted upon, in opposition to
4 Christianity; yet, by the general prevalence of propitiatory sacrifices over the heathen world, this notion, of repentance alone being sufficient to expiate guilt, appears to be contrary to the general sense of mankind.[2]

Upon the whole then; had the laws, the general laws of God's government been permitted to operate, without any interposition in our behalf, the future punishment, for aught we know to the contrary, or have any reason to think,

[2] [These remarks on the inadequacy of repentance, either as an emotion or as an act, to cancel sin, or efface the sense of guilt which remains after transgression, are expanded in Magee 'On the Atonement, disc. 1, and in Howe's 'Living Temple,' part ii. They are in perfect harmony with Scripture, which represents forgiveness as the result, not of repentance, but of the death of Christ 'in whom we have redemption through his blood, even the forgiveness of our sins'—repentance being essential, not to the efficacy of his death, but to the *appropriation* of the benefits secured by it.

Even if repentance, however, could save us, natural religion is unable to produce it. It is, in the evangelical true meaning of the term, such sorrow for sin as flows from a sense of the love and reverence due to God, and of the heinousness of sin against Him. The sorrow of the world is no such feeling. It is, on the contrary, blended with fears and impressions which make it impossible to love God or draw near to him.]

must inevitably have followed, notwithstanding anything we could have done to prevent it. Now,

V. In this darkness, or this light of Nature, call it which E you please, revelation comes in, confirms every doubting fear which could enter into the heart of man, concerning the future unprevented consequence of wickedness; supposes the world to be in a state of ruin; (a supposition which seems the very ground of the Christian dispensation, and which, if not provable by reason, yet is in no wise contrary to it;) teaches us too, that the rules of Divine government are such, as not to admit of pardon immediately, and directly upon repentance, or by the sole efficacy of it: but then teaches, at the same time, what Nature might justly have hoped, that the moral government of the universe was not so rigid, but that there was room for an interposition, to avert the fatal consequences of vice; which therefore, by this means, does admit of pardon. Revelation teaches us, that the unknown laws of God's more general government, no less than the particular laws by which we experience he governs us at present, are compassionate[3], as well as good in the more general notion of goodness: and that he hath mercifully provided, that there should be an interposition to prevent the destruction of human kind; whatever that destruction unprevented would have been. *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth*, not, to be sure, in a speculative, but in a practical sense, *that whosoever believeth in him, should not perish*[4]: gave his Son in the same way of goodness to the world, as he affords particular persons the friendly assistance of their fellow-creatures; when, without it, their temporal ruin would be the certain consequence of their follies: in the same way of goodness, I say; though in a transcendent and infinitely higher degree. And the Son of God *loved us and gave himself for us*, with a love, which he himself compares to that of human friendship: though, in this case, all comparisons must fall infinitely short of the thing intended to be illustrated by them. He interposed in such a manner as was necessary and effectual to prevent that execution of justice upon sinners, which God had appointed should otherwise have been executed upon them: or in such a manner, as to prevent that punishment

[3] P. 211, etc. [4] John iii. 16.

from actually following, which, according to the general laws of Divine government, must have followed the sins of the world, had it not been for such interposition[5].

9. If any thing here said should appear, upon first thought,
1 inconsistent with Divine goodness; a second, I am persuaded, will entirely remove that appearance. For were we to suppose the constitution of things to be such, as that the whole creation must have perished, had it not been for somewhat, which God had appointed should be, in order to prevent that ruin; even this supposition would not be inconsistent, in any degree, with the most absolutely perfect
2 goodness. But still it may be thought, that this whole manner of treating the subject before us supposes mankind to be naturally in a very strange state. And truly so it does. But it is not Christianity, which has put us into this state.[6]

[5] It cannot, I suppose, be imagined, even by the most cursory reader, that it is, in any sort, affirmed or implied in any thing said in this chapter, that none can have the benefit of the general redemption, but such as have the advantage of being made acquainted with it in the present life. But it may be needful to mention, that several questions, which have been brought into the subject before us, and determined, are not in the least entered into here: questions which have been, I fear, rashly determined, and perhaps with equal rashness contrary ways. For instance, whether God could have saved the world by other means than the death of Christ, consistently with the general laws of his government. And had not Christ come into the world, what would have been the future condition of the better sort of men; those just persons over the face of the earth, for whom, Manasses in his prayer asserts, repentance was not appointed. The meaning of the first of these questions is greatly ambiguous: and neither of them can properly be answered, without going upon that infinitely absurd supposition that we know the whole of the case. And perhaps the very inquiry, *What would have followed, if God had not done as he has,* may have in it some very great impropriety; and ought not to be carried on any further than is necessary to help our partial and inadequate conceptions of things.

[6] [This remark is of importance not only to Butler's argument, but on other grounds. The gospel defines the extent of actual transgression, and its results: Men "serve divers lusts and pleasures;" "the imaginations of the thoughts of their hearts are evil continually;" "they are alienated from the life of God;" they are

Whoever will consider the manifold miseries, and the extreme wickedness of the world; that the best have great wrongnesses within themselves, which they complain of, and endeavour to amend; but that the generality grow more profligate and corrupt with age; that heathen moralists thought the present state to be a state of punishment:[7] and what might be added, that the earth our habitation has the appearances of being a ruin:[8] whoever, I say, will consider all these, and some other obvious things, will think he has little reason to object against the Scripture

"children of wrath." It traces actual transgression, as no heathen system does, to a depraved nature. Men are "born in sin;" their hearts "are deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." And lastly it shows that this sinful condition does not originate with matter (as some of the Greeks held), or with God, or with any personal principle of evil, but with man himself. A just appreciation of these truths, especially of the last two, is essential to penitence. If men think that their hearts are *better* than their lives, and their ruined condition is rather their misfortune than their fault, repentance will be impossible; and the blame of sin will be thrown, with show of reason, anywhere but upon themselves. The importance of Christianity, in giving an account of the origin of evil, is well shown by Stillingfleet, 'Orig. Sacræ,' lib. 3, cap. 3, § 8; and especially by Halyburton on 'Natural Religion,' chap. ix.; see also Wilberforce's 'Practical View,' chap. iv.]

[7] [So Homer frequently. 'Herod. Clio,' 31,32. 'Thucydides,' ii. 64, iii. 45. 'Aristotle's Rhet.,' ii. 13 and 15.]

[8] ["The stately ruins are visible to every eye that bear in their front (yet extant) this doleful inscription—Here God once dwelt. Enough appears of the admirable frame and structure of the soul of man to show the Divine presence did sometime reside in it; more than enough of vicious deformity to proclaim he is now retired and gone. The lamps are extinct, the altar overturned; the light and love are now vanished, which did the one shine with so heavenly brightness, the other burn with so pious fervour; the golden candlestick is displaced, and thrown away as a useless thing, to make room for the throne of the prince of darkness. . . . The comely order of this house is turned into confusion; the 'beauties of holiness' into noisome impurities; the 'house of prayer into a den of thieves,' and that of the worst and most horrid kind, for every lust is a thief, and every theft sacrilege,' etc.—*The Living Temple*, chap. iv.]

account, that mankind is in a state of degradation; against this being the fact: how difficult soever he may think it to account for, or even to form a distinct conception of the occasions and circumstances of it. But that the crime of our first parents was the occasion of our being placed in a more disadvantageous condition, is a thing throughout and particularly analogous to what we see in the daily course of natural Providence; as the recovery of the world by the interposition of Christ has been shown to be so in general.

VI. The particular manner in which Christ interposed in the redemption of the world, or his office as *Mediator* in the largest sense *between God and man*, is thus represented to us in the Scripture. *He is the light of the world;*[9] the revealer of the will of God in the most eminent sense. He is a propitiatory sacrifice;[10] *the Lamb of God;*[11] and as he voluntarily offered himself up, he is styled our High Priest.[12] And which seems of peculiar weight, he is described beforehand in the Old Testament, under the same characters of a priest, and an expiatory victim.[13] And whereas it is objected, that all this is merely by way of allusion to the sacrifices of the Mosaic law, the apostle on the contrary affirms, that the *Law was a shadow of good things to come, and not the very image of the things:*[14] and that *the priests that offer gifts according to the law——serve unto the example and shadow of heavenly things, as Moses was admonished of God, when he was about to make the tabernacle. For see, saith he, that thou make all things according to the pattern showed to thee in the mount:*[15] *i. e.* the Levitical priesthood was a shadow of the priesthood of Christ; in like manner as the tabernacle made by Moses was according to that showed him in the mount. The priesthood of Christ, and the tabernacle in the mount, were the originals: of the former of which the Levitical priesthood was a type; and of the latter the tabernacle made by Moses was a copy. The doctrine of this epistle

[9] John i. and viii. 12.

[10] Rom. iii. 25, and v. 11; 1 Cor. v. 7; Eph. v. 2; 1 John ii. 2; Matt. xxvi. 28.

[11] John i. 29, 36, and throughout the Book of Revelation.

[12] Throughout the Epistle to the Hebrews.

[13] Isa. liii.; Dan. ix. 24; Ps. cx. 4.

[14] Heb. x. 1.

[15] Heb. viii. 4, 5.

then plainly is, that the legal sacrifices were allusions to the great and final atonement to be made by the blood of Christ; and not that this was an allusion to those. Nor can anything be more express or determinate, than the following passage. *It is not possible that the blood of bulls and of goats should take away sin. Wherefore when he cometh into the world, he saith, Sacrifice and offering*, i. e. of bulls and of goats, thou *wouldest not, but a body hast thou prepared me—Lo, I come to do thy will, O God—By which will we are sanctified, through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.*[16] And to add one passage more of the like kind: *Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time without sin;* i. e. without bearing sin, as he did at his first coming, by being an offering for it; without having our *iniquities* again *laid upon him*, without being any more a sin offering:—*unto them that look for him shall he appear the second time, without sin, unto salvation.*[17] Nor do the inspired writers at all confine themselves to this manner of speaking concerning the satisfaction of Christ; but declare an efficacy in what he did and suffered for us, additional to and beyond mere instruction, example, and government, in great variety of expression: *That Jesus should die for that nation*, the Jews: *and not for that nation only, but that also*, plainly by the efficacy of his death, *he should gather together in one the children of God that were scattered abroad:*[18] that *he suffered for sins, the just for the unjust;*[19] that *he gave his life, himself, a ransom;*[20] that *we are bought with a price:*[21] that *he redeemed us with his blood; redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us:*[22] that he is our *Advocate, Intercessor*, and *Propitiation:*[23] that *he was made perfect*, or consummate, *through sufferings: and being* thus *made perfect he became the author of salvation:*[24] that *God was in Christ reconciling the world*

[16] Heb. x. 4, 5, 7, 9, 10.
[17] [Heb.] ix. 28.
[18] John xi. 51, 52.
[19] 1 Pet. iii. 18.
[20] Matt. xx. 28; Mark x. 45; 1 Tim. ii. 6.
[21] 2 Pet. ii. 1; Rev. xiv. 4; 1 Cor. vi. 20.
[22] 1 Pet. i. 19; Rev. v. 9; Gal. iii. 13.
[23] Heb. vii. 25; 1 John ii. 1, 2.
[24] Heb. ii. 10, and v. 9.

to himself; by the death of his Son, by the cross; not imputing their trespasses unto them:[25] and, lastly, that *through death he destroyed him that had the power of death.*[26] Christ then having thus *humbled himself, and become obedient to death, even the death of the cross; God also hath highly exalted him, and given him a name, which is above every name: hath given all things into his hands: hath committed all judgments unto him; that all men should honour the Son even as they honour the Father.*[27] For *worthy is the Lamb that was slain, to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb, for ever and ever.*[28]

2 These passages of Scripture seem to comprehend and express the chief parts of Christ's office, as Mediator between God and man, so far, I mean, as the nature of this his office is revealed; and it is usually treated of by divines under three heads.

a First, He was by way of eminence, the Prophet; *that Prophet that should come into the world,*[29] to declare the Divine will. He published anew the law of Nature, which men had corrupted; and the very knowledge of which, to some degree, was lost among them. He taught mankind, taught us authoritatively, to *live soberly, righteously, and godly in this present world,* in expectation of the future judgment of God. He confirmed the truth of this moral system of Nature, and gave us additional evidence of it; the evidence of testimony.[30] He distinctly revealed the manner, in which God would be worshipped, the efficacy of repentance, and the rewards and punishments of a future life. Thus he was a prophet in a sense in which no other ever was. To which is to be added, that he set us a perfect *example that we should follow his steps.*

b Secondly, He has a *kingdom which is not of this world.* He

[25] 2 Cor. v. 19; Rom. v. 10; Eph. ii. 16.

[26] Heb. ii. 14. See also a remarkable passage in the book of Job, xxxiii. 24.

[27] Phil. ii. 8, 9; John iii. 35, and v. 22, 23.

[28] Rev. v. 12, 13.

[29] John vi. 14.

[30] Page 153, etc.

founded a church, to be to mankind a standing memorial of religion, and invitation to it, which he promised to be with always even to the end. He exercises an invisible government over it himself, and by his Spirit; over that part of it which is militant here on earth, a government of discipline, *for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying his body, till we all come in the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ.*[31] Of this church all persons scattered over the world, who live in obedience to his laws, are members. For these he is *gone to prepare a place*, and *will come again to receive them unto himself, that where he is there they may be also, and reign with him for ever and ever*;[32] and likewise *to take vengeance on them that know not God, and obey not his gospel.*[33]

Against these parts of Christ's office I find no objections, but what are fully obviated in the beginning of this chapter.

Lastly, Christ offered himself a propitiatory sacrifice, and made atonement for the sins of the world, which is mentioned last in regard to what is objected against it. Sacrifices of expiation were commanded the Jews, and obtained amongst most other nations, from tradition, whose original probably was revelation. And they were continually repeated, both occasionally and at the returns of stated times; and made up great part of the external religion of mankind. *But now once in the end of the world Christ appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.*[34] And this sacrifice was, in the highest degree and with the most extensive influence, of that efficacy for obtaining pardon of sin, which the heathens may be supposed to have thought their sacrifices to have been, and which the Jewish sacrifices really were in some degree, and with regard to some persons.

How and in what particular way it had this efficacy there are not wanting persons who have endeavoured to explain, but I do not find that the Scripture has explained it. We seem to be very much in the dark concerning the manner in which the ancients understood atonement to be made, *i. e.* pardon to be obtained by sacrifices. And if the Scripture

31 Eph. iv. 12, 13.

32 John xiv. 2, 3; Rev. iii. 21, and xi. 15.

33 2 Thess. i. 8.

34 Heb. ix. 26.

has, as surely it has, left this matter of the satisfaction of Christ mysterious, left somewhat in it unrevealed, all conjectures about it must be, if not evidently absurd, yet at least uncertain. Nor has any one reason to complain for want of farther information, unless he can show his claim to it.

Some have endeavoured to explain the efficacy of what Christ has done and suffered for us, beyond what the Scripture has authorized; others, probably because they could not explain it, have been for taking it away, and confining his office as Redeemer of the world to his instruction, example, and government of the church.[35] Whereas the doc-

[35] [The statements of this paragraph must be received with caution. While, on the one hand, it becomes us not to attempt to be wise above what is written, it is important that we receive all that Scripture reveals. A belief of the fact that something—the death of Christ—has been appointed, to which we are to appeal as an adequate reason for the exercise of mercy, even though we are unable to perceive *how* it is efficient, is a most essential part of true religion. It may even be in some stages of religious knowledge the only faith possible; and in such cases men confide in the propriety and power of the reason, because God has appointed it, and he knows the necessities of our condition, and the requirements of his own law.

If this were all that Scripture told us, we should need simply to believe it; but it tells us more. As the aim of the gospel is to give us just views of the Divine government, and to influence men's hearts, it discloses enough of the reasons of the arrangement to secure these ends; and all it discloses must be believed. God is the ruler as well as the father of our race; he has, therefore, both official functions and a personal character. He is merciful, and he is just. In our salvation both parts of his character are to be harmonized—holiness and love; and so it *behoved* Christ to suffer, or God cannot be just and the justifier of those who believe. When our Lord appeared he first obeyed and so honoured the law which men had broken; he then exhausted the curse, which they had incurred, giving himself a ransom for them. The efficacy of his work depended partly upon his innocence, so that he bore our sins (not his own) upon the tree; and partly upon his inherent dignity, so that he voluntarily undertook a service he owed to none, humbling himself to become obedient unto death. Clearly in this arrangement the love of God originates a plan that satisfies his justice, maintains the law in its spirit, if not in its letter, and makes it possible to remit sin without doing violence to those

trine of the gospel appears to be, not only that he taught the efficacy of repentance, but rendered it of the efficacy which it is by what he did and suffered for us; that he obtained for us the benefit of having our repentance accepted unto eternal life; not only that he revealed to sinners that they were in a capacity of salvation, and how they might obtain it; but moreover that he put them into this capacity of salvation by what he did and suffered for them, put us into a capacity of escaping future punishment and obtaining future happiness. And it is our wisdom thankfully to accept the benefit, by performing the conditions upon which it is offered on our part, without disputing how it was procured on his. For,

VII. Since we neither know by what means punishment in a future state would have followed wickedness in this, nor in what manner it would have been inflicted had it not been prevented, nor all the reasons why its infliction would have been needful, nor the particular nature of that state of happiness which Christ is gone to prepare for his disciples; and since we are ignorant how far any thing which we could do would, alone and of itself, have been effectual to prevent that punishment to which we were obnoxious, and recover that happiness which we had forfeited, it is most evident we are not judges, antecedently to revelation, whether a mediator was or was not necessary to obtain those ends; to pre-

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principles of equity which are essential to the maintenance of the Divine government. While upon the offenders themselves the arrangement produces, through the influence of the reasons of it, a deeper sense of the sinfulness of sin, of the excellence of law, the beauty of holiness, the love and righteousness of God, than is ever produced by other means. *All* the efficacy of the cross with man is not to be ascribed to those reasons, or the work of the Spirit would be unnecessary; but it is not difficult to *understand* how it should become the power of God to all who believe. With God, its efficacy depends in part on this appointment; yet even here we understand enough to regard the arrangement not as arbitrary, but as founded on attributes and principles which serve to vindicate the Divine law, and to endear the Divine character to holy and intelligent creatures. See Binney's 'Power of Faith,' sermons xii. and xiii., and Wilberforce's 'Practical View,' chap. iv. § 6.

1 vent that future punishment, and bring mankind to the :
happiness of their nature. And for the very same reas
upon supposition of the necessity of a mediator, we ar
2 more judges, antecedently to revelation, of the whole na
of his office, or the several parts of which it consists
what was fit and requisite to be assigned him, in orde
accomplish the ends of Divine providence in the app
ment. And from hence it follows that to object agains
expediency or usefulness of particular things, reveale
have been done or suffered by him, because we do no
how they were conducive to those ends, is highly ab
Yet nothing is more common to be met with than this
surdity. But if it be acknowledged beforehand that w
not judges in the case, it is evident that no objection
with any shadow of reason, be urged against any parti
part of Christ's mediatorial office revealed in Scriptur
it can be shown positively not to be requisite or cond
to the ends proposed to be accomplished, or that is in
unreasonable.

3 And there is one objection made against the satisfa
of Christ, which looks to be of this positive kind; tha
doctrine of his being appointed to suffer for the sins c
world, represents God as being indifferent whethe
punished the innocent or the guilty. Now from the
going observations we may see the extreme slightness
such objections; and (though it is most certain al
make them do not see the consequence) that they con
altogether as much against God's whole original consti
of Nature, and the whole daily course of Divine prov
in the government of the world, *i. e.* against the
scheme of Theism and the whole notion of religi
against Christianity. For the world is a constitut
system, whose parts have a mutual reference to each
and there is a scheme of things gradually carrying on,
the course of Nature, to the carrying on of which G
appointed us in various ways to contribute. And w
the daily course of natural providence, it is appointe
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is liable to the very same objection as the instance
now considering. The infinitely greater importance
appointment of Christianity, which is objected agains

not hinder but it may be, as it plainly is, an appointment of the very same kind with what the world affords us daily examples of. Nay, if there were any force at all in the objection, it would be stronger in one respect against natural providence than against Christianity; because under the former we are in many cases commanded, and even necessitated whether we will or no, to suffer for the faults of others, whereas the sufferings of Christ were voluntary. The world's being under the righteous government of God does indeed imply, that finally and upon the whole every one shall receive according to his personal deserts; and the general doctrine of the whole Scripture is, that this shall be the completion of the Divine government. But during the progress, and, for aught we know, even in order to the completion of this moral scheme, vicarious punishments may be fit and absolutely necessary. Men by their follies run themselves into extreme distress, into difficulties which would be absolutely fatal to them were it not for the interposition and assistance of others. God commands by the law of Nature that we afford them this assistance, in many cases where we cannot do it without very great pains and labour, and sufferings to ourselves. And we see in what variety of ways one person's sufferings contribute to the relief of another; and how or by what particular means this comes to pass, or follows from the constitution and laws of Nature, which come under our notice; and, being familiarized to it, men are not shocked with it. So that the reason of their insisting upon objections of the foregoing kind against the satisfaction of Christ is, either that they do not consider God's settled and uniform appointments as his appointments at all, or else they forget that vicarious punishment is a providential appointment of every day's experience; and then, from their being unacquainted with the more general laws of Nature or Divine government over the world, and not seeing how the sufferings of Christ could contribute to the redemption of it, unless by arbitrary and tyrannical will; they conclude his sufferings could not contribute to it any other way. And yet what has been often alleged in justification of this doctrine, even from the apparent natural tendency of this method of our redemption, its tendency to vindicate the authority of God's laws, and deter his creatures from sin,

this has never yet been answered, and is, I think, plainly unanswerable; though I am far from thinking it an account of the whole of the case. But without taking this into consideration, it abundantly appears, from the observations above made, that this objection is not an objection against Christianity, but against the whole general constitution of Nature. And if it were to be considered as an objection against Christianity, or, considering it as it is, an objection against the constitution of Nature, it amounts to no more in conclusion than this, that a Divine appointment cannot be necessary or expedient, because the objector does not discern it be so; though he must own that the nature of the case is such, as renders him incapable of judging whether it be so or not, or of seeing it to be necessary, though it were so.

4 It is indeed a matter of great patience to reasonable men, to find people arguing in this manner; objecting against the credibility of such particular things revealed in Scripture, that they do not see the necessity or expediency of them. For though it is highly right, and the most pious exercise of our understanding, to inquire with due reverence into the ends and reasons of God's dispensations: yet when those reasons are concealed, to argue from our ignorance, that such dispensations cannot be from God, is infinitely absurd. The presumption of this kind of objections seems almost lost in the folly of them. And the folly of them is yet greater, when they are urged, as usually they are, against things in Christianity analogous or like to those natural dispensations of Providence, which are matter of experience. Let reason be kept to: and if any part of the Scripture account of the redemption of the world by Christ can be shown to be really contrary to it, let the Scripture, in the name of God, be given up; but let not such poor creatures as we go on objecting against an infinite scheme, that we do not see the necessity or usefulness of all its parts, and call this reasoning; and, which still further heightens the absurdity in the present case, parts which we are not actively concerned in. For it may be worth mentioning,

5 Lastly, That not only the reason of the thing, but the whole analogy of Nature, should teach us, not to expect to have the like information concerning the Divine conduct, as

concerning our own duty. God instructs us by experience, (for it is not reason, but experience which instructs us,) what good or bad consequences will follow from our acting in such and such manners: and by this he directs us, how we are to behave ourselves. But though we are sufficiently a
instructed for the common purposes of life; yet it is but an almost infinitely small part of natural providence which we are at all let into. The case is the same with regard to revelation. The doctrine of a mediator between God and man, against which it is objected, that the expediency of b
some things in it is not understood, relates only to what was done on God's part in the appointment, and on the Mediator's in the execution of it. For what is required of us in consequence of this gracious dispensation, is another subject, in which none can complain for want of information. The constitution of the world, and God's natural government over it, is all mystery, as much as the Christian dispensation. Yet under the first he has given men all things pertaining to life; and under the other, all things pertaining unto godliness. And it may be added, that there is nothing hard to be accounted for in any of the common precepts of Christianity: though if there were, surely a Divine command is abundantly sufficient to lay us under the strongest obligations to obedience. But the fact is, that the reasons of all the Christian precepts are evident. Positive institutions are manifestly necessary to keep up and propagate religion amongst mankind. And our duty to Christ, the internal and external worship of him; this part of the religion of the gospel, manifestly arises out of what he has done and suffered, his authority and dominion, and the relation which he is revealed to stand in to us[1].

CHAPTER VI.

OF THE WANT OF UNIVERSALITY IN REVELATION: AND OF THE SUPPOSED DEFICIENCY IN THE PROOF OF IT.

[The evidence of revelation is deficient, it is said, and so the revelation is not true. Revelation is not universal, it is said, and

[1] P. 159, etc.

therefore not true. These objections, which are made (it will be noticed) positive arguments against religion, are against both natural and revealed. Note—

A These objections are groundless, for they rest upon these two groundless suppositions;
  1 That God will not bestow favour upon us, except in that degree which we think most advantageous.
  2 That God will not bestow blessings upon some, except He bestow them upon all. Suppositions which the general analogy of Nature contradicts.

B These objections are answered by analogies in God's natural government.
  1 The evidence, it is said, is doubtful, because deficient. But so is the evidence
    a Of what constitutes our temporal interests; and
    b Of the best and surest means of attaining it.
  2 Revelation is not, it is said, universal. But so neither is the bestowal of natural gifts; which want of universality, however, is no argument against God's natural government, nor against the prudent management of our affairs under it. This evidence, and the partial bestowment of truth, illustrated in the successive ages of Judaism and Christianity; in the condition of the heathen and of Mahometans, and of those who live under a corrupt religious system, etc.; and the whole shown to be analogous to facts in Nature, and in the providence of God.

C This reasoning, defended by the fact, that every man will be treated according to his light and privileges; though this statement does not imply either
  1 That all men's religious condition is equally advantageous; or
  2 That we ought not, therefore, to improve our own condition, or that of others.

D What the reasons of this arrangement are, we cannot tell; but it may be said,
  1 Generally, that the same principle which disposed God to make various orders of creatures, and with various capacities, disposed Him to place creatures of the same order (and even the same creatures, at different periods), in different positions.
  2 More particularly, it is very difficult to give a reason; as may be seen from our own case. A system like ours, implies

    Things past and future, unknown to us, but possibly containing the explanation:

    It requires, too, variety; which may supply the reason.

And, at all events, the reason why we are placed in a state of ignorance, is probably also the reason, why the reason of our being in that state is not told us.

E That this arrangement is no ground of complaint, appears from the following facts:—

1 The deficiency of Christian evidence may be part of our intellectual probation, intended to exercise our minds virtuously in examining the evidence. Such exercise in intellectual matters, may as easily test our fairness and candour, as probation in practice.

2 It may be part of our general moral and religious probation, that it proves our character, thus:—

If religion is only supposably credible,

a Serious inquiry, and moral self-control, are made obligatory; and profanity, carelessness, and presumption, are thereby condemned: especially

b As our example will have influence with others; the reason being,

1 That doubt supposes SOME evidence; and

2 The lowest evidence ought to have some practical influence. The degree of that influence depends on the fairness and honesty of our character; the practical neglect of any evidence showing moral deficiency, just as the incapacity to discern it shows our intellectual deficiency.

3 It may constitute moral discipline and improvement; as do difficulties in practice, when the truth is believed.

Temptation of any kind (as to evidence, for example), exercises, and so proves, the moral principle,

a Teaching us not thoughtlessly to reject evidence, nor to conceal it, and to act virtuously, even though the results are uncertain; and

b What is thus exercised and proved is thereby strengthened. So that there is the same reason for deficient evidence, as for our trials; nor is it unlikely

c That with some (whose external temptations are small), these difficulties form the chief part of their discipline; as in common life some are tried, not by having to practise prudence, but by having to find out what prudence is.

F After all, though it is thus far supposed that the deficiency of the evidence of religion belongs to the evidence itself, it is possible that the deficiency may be owing to something in the objector; either

1 To his fault—want of earnestness in attention to evidence, etc., just as in practical matters; or

2 To his requiring more than a popular proof of Christianity, without applying the necessary examination or knowledge.

That evidence is level to the common understanding; but is liable to objections. Many *see* those objections, without giving time to *see through them*. Still the evidence, properly regarded, *or* thoroughly considered, is real and conclusive.

It may, indeed, be objected,

3 That, whatever the source of this deficiency, the evidence ought to be without doubt, as the directions of earthly masters are. To which, answer—

a That wherever the fallacy lies, there is fallacy; for in temporal affairs, God (our Master) does not give evidence free from doubt: moreover,

b Religion differs from all external commands. It seeks not external obedience simply, but the testing and exercise of our principles. That is best secured by commands less plain. Besides, God's will is conditional; ending in either obedience and reward, or vice and punishment.

G In conclusion, as religion implies probation, the probation may consist in the very things which are here made grounds of objection:

1 Judging from the reason of the thing, it seems that we may be tried by deficient evidence, as easily as by inattention or passion.

2 Judging from experience, we are as often tried by causes which produce doubts (imperfect information, etc.), as by inattention or passion.

3 Hence (to sceptics), it may be said, that scepticism may spring from want of solicitude, not from want of evidence; and that in daily life we act, where the probability is against success, and if only it is *possible* we may succeed.]

It has been thought by some persons, that if the evidence of revelation appears doubtful, this itself turns into a positive argument against it: because it cannot be supposed, that, if it were true, it would be left to subsist upon doubtful evidence. And the objection against revelation from its not being universal is often insisted upon as of great weight.

A Now the weakness of these opinions may be shown, by

observing the suppositions on which they are founded: which are really such as these; that it cannot be thought God would have bestowed any favour at all upon us, unless 1
in the degree, which, we think, he might, and which, we imagine, would be most to our particular advantage; and also that it cannot be thought he would bestow a favour 2
upon any, unless he bestowed the same upon all: suppositions, which we find contradicted, not by a few instances in God's natural government of the world, but by the general analogy of Nature together.

Persons who speak of the evidence of religion as doubtful, B
and of this supposed doubtfulness as a positive argument against it, should be put upon considering, what that evidence indeed is, which they act upon with regard to their temporal interests. For, it is not only extremely difficult, but 1
in many cases absolutely impossible, to balance pleasure and pain, satisfaction and uneasiness, so as to be able to say on which side the overplus is. There are the like difficulties n
and impossibilities in making the due allowance for a change of temper and taste, for satiety, disgusts, ill health: any of which render men incapable of enjoying, after they have obtained what they most eagerly desired. Numberless too are the accidents, besides that one of untimely death, which may even probably disappoint the best-concerted schemes: and strong objections are often seen to lie against them, not to be removed or answered, but which seem overbalanced by reasons on the other side; so as that the certain difficulties and dangers of the pursuit are, by every one, thought justly disregarded, upon account of the appearing greater advantages in case of success, though there be but little probability of it. Lastly, every one observes our liableness, if we be not upon our guard, to be deceived by the falsehood of men, and the false appearances of things: and this danger must be greatly increased, if there be a strong bias within, suppose from indulged passion, to favour the deceit. Hence arises that great uncertainty and doubtfulness of proof, wherein our temporal interest really consists; what are the most probable means of attaining it; and whether r
those means will eventually be successful. And numberless instances there are, in the daily course of life, in which all men think it reasonable to engage in pursuits, though the

probability is greatly against succeeding; and to make such provision for themselves, as it is supposable they may have occasion for, though the plain acknowledged probability is, that they never shall. Then those who think the objection against revelation, from its light not being universal, to be
3 of weight, should observe, that the Author of Nature, in numberless instances, bestows that upon some, which he does not upon others, who seem equally to stand in need of it. Indeed he appears to bestow all his gifts with the most promiscuous variety among creatures of the same species; health and strength, capacities of prudence and of knowledge, means of improvement, riches, and all external advantages. And as there are not any two men found, of exactly like shape and features, so it is probable there are not any two of an exactly like constitution, temper, and situation, with regard to the goods and evils of life. Yet notwithstanding these uncertainties and varieties, God does exercise a natural government over the world; and there is such a thing as a prudent and imprudent institution of life, with regard to our health and our affairs, under that his natural government.

As neither the Jewish nor Christian revelation has been universal; and as they have been afforded to a greater or less part of the world, at different times; so likewise at different times, both revelations have had different degrees of evidence. The Jews who lived during the succession of prophets, that is, from Moses till after the Captivity, had higher evidence of the truth of their religion, than those had, who lived in the interval between the last-mentioned period and the coming of Christ. And the first Christians had higher evidence of the miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, than what we have now. They had also a strong presumptive proof of the truth of it, perhaps of much greater force, in way of argument, than many think, of which we have very little remaining; I mean the presumptive proof of its truth, from the influence which it had upon the lives of the generality of its professors. And we, or future ages, may possibly have a proof of it, which they could not have, from the conformity between the prophetic history, and the state of the world and of Christianity. And further: if we were to suppose the evidence, which some have of religion, to amount to little more than seeing that it

may be true; but that they remain in great doubts and uncertainties about both its evidence and its nature, and great perplexities concerning the rule of life: others to have a full conviction of the truth of religion, with a distinct knowledge of their duty; and others severally to have all the intermediate degrees of religious light and evidence, which lie between these two—if we put the case, that for the present, it was intended, revelation should be no more than a small light, in the midst of a world greatly overspread, notwithstanding it, with ignorance and darkness; that certain glimmerings of this light should extend, and be directed, to remote distances, in such a manner as that those who really partook of it should not discern from whence it originally came: that some in a nearer situation to it should have its light obscured, and, in different ways and degrees, intercepted: and that others should be placed within its clearer influence, and be much more enlivened, cheered, and directed by it; but yet that even to these it should be no more than *a light shining in a dark place;* all this would be perfectly uniform, and of a piece with the conduct of Providence in the distribution of its other blessings. If the fact of the case really were, that some have received no light at all from the Scriptures; as many ages and countries in the heathen world: that others, though they have, by means of it, had essential or natural religion enforced upon their consciences, yet have never had the genuine Scripture-revelation, with its real evidence, proposed to their consideration; and the ancient Persians and modern Mahometans may possibly be instances of people in a situation somewhat like to this: that others, though they have had the Scripture laid before them as of Divine revelation, yet have had it with the system and evidence of Christianity so interpolated, the system so corrupted, the evidence so blended with false miracles, as to leave the mind in the utmost doubtfulness and uncertainty about the whole; which may be the state of some thoughtful men, in most of those nations who call themselves Christian: and lastly, that others have had Christianity offered to them in its genuine simplicity, and with its proper evidence, as persons in countries and churches of civil and of Christian liberty: but however that even these persons are left in great ignorance in many respects, and have by no

means light afforded them enough to satisfy their curiosity, but only to regulate their life, to teach them their duty, and encourage them in the careful discharge of it: I say, if we were to suppose this somewhat of a general true account of the degrees of moral and religious light and evidence, which were intended to be afforded mankind, and of what has actually been and is their situation, in their moral and religious capacity; there would be nothing in all this ignorance, doubtfulness, and uncertainty, in all these varieties, and supposed disadvantages of some in comparison of others, respecting religion, but may be paralleled by manifest analogies in the natural dispensations of Providence at present, and considering ourselves merely in our temporal capacity.

Nor is there anything shocking in all this, or which would seem to bear hard upon the moral administration in Nature, if we would really keep in mind, that every one shall be dealt equitably with: instead of forgetting this, or explaining it away, after it is acknowledged in words. All shadow of injustice, and indeed all harsh appearances, in this various economy of Providence, would be lost; if we would keep in mind, that every merciful allowance shall be made, and no more be required of any one, than what might have been equitably expected of him from the circumstances in which he was placed; and not what might have been expected, had he been placed in other circumstances: *i.e.* in Scripture language, that every man shall be *accepted according to what he had, not according to what he had not.*[1] This how-
1 ever doth not by any means imply, that all persons' condition here is equally advantageous with respect to futurity. And Providence's designing to place some in greater darkness
2 with respect to religious knowledge, is no more a reason why they should not endeavour to get out of that darkness, and others to bring them out of it; than why ignorant and slow people in matters of other knowledge should not endeavour to learn, or should not be instructed.

It is not unreasonable to suppose, that the same wise and good principle, whatever it was, which disposed the Author of Nature to make different kinds and orders of creatures, disposed him also to place creatures of like kinds in different situations: and that the same principle which disposed him to

[1] 2 Cor viii. 12.

make creatures of different moral capacities, disposed him also to place creatures of like moral capacities in different religious situations; and even the same creatures, in different periods of their being. And the account or reason of this is 1
also most probably the account why the constitution of things is such, as that creatures of moral natures or capacities, for a considerable part of that duration in which they are living agents, are not at all subjects of morality and religion; but grow up to be so, and grow up to be so more and more, gradually from childhood to mature age.

What, in particular, is the account or reason of these 2
things, we must be greatly in the dark, were it only that we know so very little even of our own case. Our present state may possibly be the consequence of somewhat past, which we are wholly ignorant of: as it has a reference to somewhat to come, of which we know scarce any more than is necessary for practice. A system or constitution, in its notion, implies variety: and so complicated an one as this world, very great variety. So that were revelation universal, yet, from men's different capacities of understanding, from the different lengths of their lives, their different educations and other external circumstances, and from their difference of temper and bodily constitution; their religious situations would be widely different, and the disadvantage of some in comparison of others, perhaps, altogether as much as at present. And the true account, whatever it be, why mankind, or such a part of mankind, are placed in this condition of ignorance, must be supposed also the true account of our further ignorance, in not knowing the reasons why, or whence it is, that they are placed in this condition. But the following practical reflections may deserve the serious consideration of those persons, who think the circumstances of mankind or their own, in the forementioned respects, a ground E
of complaint.

First, The evidence of religion not appearing obvious, may 1
constitute one particular part of some men's trial in the religious sense: as it gives scope for a virtuous exercise, or vicious neglect, of their understanding, in examining or not examining into that evidence. There seems no possible reason to be given, why we may not be in a state of moral probation, with regard to the exercise of our understanding

pon the subject of religion, as we are with regard to our
ehaviour in common affairs. The former is as much a thing
rithin our power and choice as the latter. And I suppose
; is to be laid down for certain, that the same character, the
ume inward principle, which, after a man is convinced of
he truth of religion, renders him obedient to the precepts
f it, would, were he not thus convinced, set him about an
xamination of it, upon its system and evidence being offered
o his thoughts; and that in the latter state his examination
rould be with an impartiality, seriousness, and solicitude,
roportionable to what his obedience is in the former. And
s inattention, negligence, want of all serious concern, about
matter of such a nature and such importance, when offered
o men's consideration, is, before a distinct conviction of its
uth, as real immoral depravity and dissoluteness, as neglect
f religious practice after such conviction: so active solici-
ıde about it, and fair impartial consideration of its evidence
efore such conviction, is as really an exercise of a morally
ght temper, as is religious practice after. Thus, that
eligion is not intuitively true, but a matter of deduction
nd inference; that a conviction of its truth is not forced
pon every one, but left to be, by some, collected with heed-
ıl attention to premises; this as much constitutes religious
robation, as much affords sphere, scope, opportunity, for
ight and wrong behaviour, as anything whatever does. And
heir manner of treating this subject, when laid before them,
hows what is in their heart, and is an exertion of it.

Secondly, It appears to be a thing as evident, though it is
ot so much attended to, that if, upon consideration of reli-
ion, the evidence of it should seem to any persons doubt-
ıl, in the highest supposable degree; even this doubtful
vidence will, however, put them into a general state of
robation in the moral and religious sense. For, suppose a
ıan to be really in doubt, whether such a person had not
one him the greatest favour; or, whether his whole tem-
oral interest did not depend upon that person: no one,
rho had any sense of gratitude and of prudence, could pos-
ibly consider himself in the same situation, with regard to
uch person, as if he had no such doubt. In truth, it is as
ıst to say, that certainty and doubt are the same; as to
ay, the situations now mentioned would leave a man as

entirely at liberty in point of gratitude or prudence, as he would be, were he certain he had received no favour from such person, or that he no way depended upon him. And thus, though the evidence of religion which is afforded to some men should be little more than that they are given to see, the system of Christianity, or religion in general, to be supposable and credible; this ought in all reason to beget a serious practical apprehension, that it may be true. And even this will afford matter of exercise for religious suspense and deliberation, for moral resolution and self-government because the apprehension that religion may be true does as really lay men under obligations, as a full conviction that it is true. It gives occasion and motives to consider further the important subject; to preserve attentively upon their minds a general implicit sense that they may be under Divine moral government, an awful solicitude about religion, whether natural or revealed. Such apprehension ought to turn men's eyes to every degree of new light which may be had, from whatever side it comes; and induce them to refrain, in the meantime, from all immoralities, and live in the conscientious practice of every common virtue. Especially are they bound to keep at the greatest distance from all dissolute profaneness; for this the very nature of the case forbids; and to treat with the highest reverence a matter, upon which their own whole interest and being, and the fate of Nature, depend. This behaviour, and an active endeavour to maintain within themselves this temper, is the business, the duty, and the wisdom of those persons, who complain of the doubtfulness of religion: is what they are under the most proper obligations to. And such behaviour is an exertion of, and has a tendency to improve in them, that character which the practice of all the several duties of religion, from a full conviction of its truth, is an exertion of, and has a tendency to improve in others: others, I say, to whom God has afforded such conviction. Nay, considering the infinite importance of religion, revealed as well as natural, I think it may be said in general, that whoever will weigh the matter thoroughly may see, there is not near so much difference, as is commonly imagined, between what ought in reason to be the rule of life, to those persons who are fully convinced of its truth, and to those who have only a serious doubting apprehension, that it may be true. Their

hopes, and fears, and obligations, will be in various degrees: but, as the subject-matter of their hopes and fears is the same, so the subject-matter of their obligations, what they are bound to do and to refrain from, is not so very unlike.

It is to be observed further, that, from a character of understanding, or a situation of influence in the world, some persons have it in their power to do infinitely more harm or good, by setting an example of profaneness and avowed disregard to all religion, or, on the contrary, of a serious, though perhaps doubting, apprehension of its truth, and of a reverend regard to it under this doubtfulness; than they can do, by acting well or ill in all the common intercourses amongst mankind. And consequently they are most highly accountable for a behaviour, which they may easily foresee, is of such importance, and in which there is most plainly a right and a wrong; even admitting the evidence of religion to be as doubtful as is pretended.

The ground of these observations, and that which renders them just and true, is, that doubting necessarily implies some degree of evidence for that, of which we doubt. For no person would be in doubt concerning the truth of a number of facts so and so circumstanced, which should accidentally come into his thoughts, and of which he had no evidence at all. And though in the case of an even chance, and where consequently we were in doubt, we should in common language say, that we had no evidence at all for either side, yet that situation of things, which renders it an even chance and no more, that such an event will happen, renders this case equivalent to all others, where there is such evidence on both sides of a question,[2] as leaves the mind in doubt concerning the truth. Indeed in all these cases, there is no more evidence on one side than on the other; but there is (what is equivalent to) much more for either, than for the truth of a number of facts which come into one's thoughts at random. And thus, in all these cases, doubt as much presupposes evidence, lower degrees of evidence, as belief presupposes higher, and certainty higher still. Any one who will a little attend to the nature of evidence, will easily carry this observation on, and see, that between no evidence at all, and that degree of it which affords ground of doubt, there are as many intermediate

[2] Introduction [p. 6].

degrees, as there are, between that degree which is the ground of doubt, and demonstration. And though we have not facilities to distinguish these degrees of evidence with any sort of exactness, yet, in proportion as they are discerned, they ought to influence our practice. For it is as real an imperfection in the moral character, not to be influenced in practice by a lower degree of evidence when discerned, as it is in the understanding, not to discern it. And as, in all subjects which men consider, they discern the lower as well as higher degrees of evidence, proportionably to their capacity of understanding; so in practical subjects, they are influenced in practice, by the lower as well as higher degrees of it, proportionably to their fairness and honesty. And as, in proportion to defects in the understanding, men are unapt to see lower degrees of evidence, are in danger of overlooking evidence when it is not glaring, and are easily imposed upon in such cases; so in proportion to the corruption of the heart, they seem capable of satisfying themselves with having no regard in practice to evidence acknowledged real, if it be not overbearing. From these things it must follow, that doubting concerning religion implies such a degree of evidence for it, as, joined with the consideration of its importance, unquestionably lays men, under the obligations before mentioned, to have a dutiful regard to it in all their behaviour.

Thirdly, The difficulties in which the evidence of religion is involved, which some complain of, is no more a just ground of complaint than the external circumstances of temptation, which others are placed in; or than difficulties in the practice of it, after a full conviction of its truth. Temptations render our state a more improving state of discipline,[a] than it would be otherwise: as they give occasion for a more attentive exercise of the virtuous principle which confirms and strengthens it more than an easier or less attentive exercise of it could. Now speculative difficulties are, in this respect, of the very same nature with these external temptations. For the evidence of religion not appearing obvious, is to some persons a temptation to reject it, without any consideration at all; and therefore requires such an attentive exercise of

[a] Part I. chap. v.

the virtuous principle, seriously to consider that evidence, as there would be no occasion for, but for such temptation. And the supposed doubtfulness of its evidence, after it has been in some sort considered, affords opportunity to an unfair mind of explaining away, and deceitfully hiding from itself that evidence which it might see; and also for men's encouraging themselves in vice, from hopes of impunity, though they do clearly see thus much at least, that these hopes are uncertain: in like manner as the common temptation to many instances of folly, which end in temporal infamy and ruin, is the ground for hope of not being detected, and of escaping with impunity; *i. e.*, the doubtfulness of the proof beforehand, that such foolish behaviour will thus end in infamy and ruin. On the contrary, supposed doubtfulness in the evidence of religion calls for a more careful and attentive exercise of the virtuous principle, in fairly yielding themselves up to the proper influence of any real evidence, though doubtful; and in practising conscientiously all virtue, though under some uncertainty, whether the government in the universe may not possibly be such, as that vice may escape with impunity. And in general, temptation, meaning by this word the lesser allurements to wrong and difficulties in the discharge of our duty, as well as the greater ones; temptation, I say, as such and of every kind and degree, as it calls forth some virtuous efforts, additional to what would otherwise have been wanting, cannot but be an additional discipline and improvement of virtue, as well as probation of it in the other senses of that word.[4] So that the very same account is to be given, why the evidence of religion should be left in such a manner, as to require, in some, an attentive, solicitous, perhaps painful exercise of their understanding about it; as why others should be placed in such circumstances, as that the practice of its common duties, after a full conviction of the truth of it, should require attention, solicitude, and pains: or, why appearing doubtfulness should be permitted to afford matter of temptation to some; as why external difficulties and allurements should be permitted to afford matter of temptation to others. The same account also is to be given, why some should be exercised with tempt-

[4] Part I. chap. iv., and p. 109, 110.

ations of both these kinds; as why others should be exercised with the latter in such very high degrees as some have been, particularly as the primitive Christians were.

Nor does there appear any absurdity in supposing, that the speculative difficulties in which the evidence of religion is involved, may make even the principal part of some persons' trial. For as the chief temptations of the generality of the world are the ordinary motives to injustice or unrestrained pleasure; or to live in the neglect of religion from that frame of mind which renders many persons almost without feeling as to anything distant, or which is not the object of their senses: so there are other persons without this shallowness of temper, persons of a deeper sense as to what is invisible and future; who not only see, but have a general practical feeling, that what is to come will be present, and that things are not less real for their not being the objects of sense; and who, from their natural constitution of body and of temper, and from their external condition, may have small temptations to behave ill, small difficulty in behaving well, in the common course of life. Now when these latter persons have a distinct full conviction of the truth of religion, without any possible doubts or difficulties, the practice of it is to them unavoidable, unless they will do a constant violence to their own minds; and religion is scarce any more a discipline to them, than it is to creatures in a state of perfection. Yet these persons may possibly stand in need of moral discipline and exercise in a higher degree, than they would have by such an easy practice of religion. Or it may be requisite, for reasons unknown to us, that they should give some further manifestation[5] what is their moral character to the creation of God, than such a practice of it would be. Thus in the great variety of religious situations in which men are placed, what constitutes, what chiefly and peculiarly constitutes, the probation, in all senses, of some persons, may be the difficulties in which the evidence of religion is involved; and their principal and distinguished trial may be, how they will behave under and with respect to these difficulties. Circumstances in men's situation in their temporal capacity, analogous in good measure to this respecting religion, are to be observed. We find some persons

[5] P. 110.

are placed in such a situation in the world, as that their chief difficulty with regard to conduct, is not the doing what is prudent when it is known; for this, in numberless cases, is as easy as the contrary: but to some the principal exercise is, recollection and being upon their guard against deceits, the deceits suppose of those about them; against false appearances of reason and prudence. To persons in some situations, the principal exercise with respect to conduct is, attention in order to inform themselves what is proper, what is really the reasonable and prudent part to act.

But as I have hitherto gone upon supposition, that men's dissatisfaction with the evidence of religion is not owing to their neglects or prejudices; it must be added, on the other hand, in all common reason, and as what the truth of the case plainly requires should be added, that such dissatisfaction possibly may be owing to those, possibly may be men's own fault. For,

If there are any persons, who never set themselves heartily and in earnest to be informed in religion; if there are any, who secretly wish it may not prove true; and are less attentive to evidence than to difficulties, and more to objections than to what is said in answer to them: these persons will scarce be thought in a likely way of seeing the evidence of religion, though it were most certainly true, and capable of being ever so fully proved. If any accustom themselves to consider this subject usually in the way of mirth and sport: if they attend to forms and representations, and inadequate manners of expression, instead of the real things intended by them: (for signs often can be no more than inadequately expressive of the things signified:) or if they substitute human errors in the room of Divine truth; why may not all, or any of these things, hinder some men from seeing that evidence, which really is seen by others; as a like turn of mind, with respect to matters of common speculation and practice, does, we find by experience, hinder them from attaining that knowledge and right understanding in matters of common speculation and practice, which more fair and attentive minds attain to? And the effect will be the same, whether their neglect of seriously considering the evidence of religion, and their indirect behaviour with regard to it, proceed from mere carelessness, or from the grosser vices; or whether it be

owing to this, that forms and figurative manners of expression, as well as errors, administer occasions of ridicule, when the things intended, and the truth itself, would not. Men may indulge a ludicrous turn so far as to lose all sense of conduct and prudence in worldly affairs, and even, as it seems, to impair their faculty of reason. And in general levity, carelessness, passion, and prejudice, *do* hinder us from being rightly informed, with respect to common things: and they *may*, in like manner, and perhaps in some further providential manner, with respect to moral and religious subjects: may hinder evidence from being laid before us, and from being seen when it is. The Scripture[6] does declare, that

[6] Dan. xii. 10. See also Is. xxix. 13, 14; Matt. vi. 23, and xi. 25, and xiii. 11, 12; John iii. 19, and v. 44; 1 Cor. ii. 14, and 2 Cor. iv. 4; 2 Tim. iii. 13; and that affectionate as well as authoritative admonition, so very many times inculcated, *He that hath ears to hear, let him hear.* Grotius saw so strongly the thing intended in these and other passages of Scripture of the like sense, as to say, that the proof given us of Christianity was less than it might have been for this very purpose: *Ut ita sermo Evangelii tanquam lapis esset Lydius ad quem ingenia sanabilia explorarentur.* De Ver. R. C. lib. ii. towards the end. [The whole passage is worth quoting: "If there be any one who is not satisfied with the arguments hitherto alleged for the truth of the Christian religion, but desires more powerful ones, he ought to know that different things must have different kinds of proof; one sort in mathematics, another in the properties of bodies, another in doubtful matters, and another in matters of fact, and we are to abide by that the testimonies for which are free from suspicion. If this be not admitted, not only is the utility of all history lost, and much of medical science, but all the natural affection which is between parents and children, since these can be known in no other way. And it is the will of God that those things which he would have us believe, so that faith may be accepted as obedience, should not be so plain as what is perceived by our senses or by demonstration; but only so far as is sufficient to procure the belief of a man who is not obstinately bent against evidence; so that the gospel is as a touchstone whereby to test the honesty of men's dispositions." This notion is a favourite one with the Platonists: "A disposition to believe precedes all doctrines, especially if they be asserted, not by common, but by great and almost divine men."]

every one *shall not understand*. And it makes no difference, by what providential conduct this comes to pass: whether the evidence of Christianity was, originally and with design, put and left so, as that those who are desirous of evading moral obligations should not see it; and that honest-minded persons should: or, whether it comes to pass by any other means.

Further: The general proof of natural religion and of Christianity does, I think, lie level to common men; even those, the greatest part of whose time, from childhood to old age, is taken up with providing for themselves and their families the common conveniencies, perhaps necessaries, of life: those, I mean, of this rank, who ever think at all of asking after proof, or attending to it. Common men, were they as much in earnest about religion, as about their temporal affairs, are capable of being convinced upon real evidence, that there is a God who governs the world: and they feel themselves to be of a moral nature, and accountable creatures. And as Christianity entirely falls in with this their natural sense of things, so they are capable, not only of being persuaded, but of being made to see, that there is evidence of miracles wrought in attestation of it, and many appearing completions of prophecy. But though this proof is real and conclusive, yet it is liable to objections, and may be run up into difficulties; which, however, persons who are capable, not only of talking of, but of really seeing, are capable also of seeing through: *i. e.* not of clearing up and answering them, so as to satisfy their curiosity, for of such knowledge we are not capable with respect to any one thing in Nature; but capable of seeing that the proof is not lost in these difficulties, or destroyed by these objections. But then a thorough examination into religion with regard to these objections, which cannot be the business of every man, is a matter of pretty large compass, and, from the nature of it, requires some knowledge, as well as time and attention, to see, how the evidence comes out, upon balancing one thing with another, and what, upon the whole, is the amount of it. Now if persons who have picked up these objections from others, and take for granted they are of weight, upon the word of those from whom they received them, or by often retailing of them, come to see, or fancy they see them to be

of weight, will not prepare themselves for such an examination with a competent degree of knowledge; or will not give that time and attention to the subject, which, from the nature of it, is necessary for attaining such information: in this case, they must remain in doubtfulness, ignorance, or error; in the same way as they must, with regard to common sciences, and matters of common life, if they neglect the necessary means of being informed in them.

But still perhaps it will be objected, that if a prince or common master were to send directions to a servant, he would take care, that they should always bear the certain marks, whom they came from, and that their sense should be always plain: so as that there should be no possible doubt, if he could help it, concerning the authority or meaning of them. Now the proper answer to all this kind of objections is, that, wherever the fallacy lies, it is even certain we cannot argue thus with respect to Him, who is the governor of the world: and particularly that he does not afford us such information, with respect to our temporal affairs and interests, as experience abundantly shows. However, there is a full answer to this objection, from the very nature of religion. For, the reason why a prince would give his directions in this plain manner is, that he absolutely desires such an external action should be done, without concerning himself with the motive or principle upon which it is done: *i. e.* he regards only the external event or the thing's being done; and not at all, properly speaking, the doing of it, or the action. Whereas the whole of morality and religion consisting merely in action itself, there is no sort of parallel between the cases. But if the prince be supposed to regard only the action; *i. e.* only to desire to exercise, or in any sense prove, the understanding or loyalty of a servant; he would not always give his orders in such a plain manner. It may be proper to add, that the will of God, respecting morality and religion, may be considered either as absolute, or as only conditional. If it be absolute, it can only be thus, that we should act virtuously in such given circumstances; not that we should be brought to act so, by his changing of our circumstances. And if God's will be thus absolute, then it is in our power, in the highest and strictest sense, to do or to contradict his will; which is a most weighty con-

sideration. Or his will may be considered only as conditional, that if we act so and so, we shall be rewarded; if otherwise, punished: of which conditional will of the Author of Nature, the whole constitution of it affords most certain instances.

0 Upon the whole: that we are in a state of religion necessarily implies, that we are in a state of probation: and the credibility of our being at all in such a state being admitted, there seems no peculiar difficulty in supposing our probation to be, just as it is, in those respects which are above objected
1 against. There seems no pretence, from *the reason of the thing*, to say that the trial cannot equitably be any thing, but whether persons will act suitably to certain information, or such as admits no room for doubt; so as that there can be no danger of miscarriage, but either from their not attending to what they certainly know, or from overbearing passion hurrying them on to act contrary to it. For, since ignorance and doubt afford scope for probation in all senses, as really as intuitive conviction or certainty: and since the two former are to be put to the same account as difficulties in practice; men's moral probation may also be, whether they will take due care to inform themselves by impartial consideration, and afterwards whether they will act as the case requires, upon the evidence which they have, however
2 doubtful. And this we find, by *experience*, is frequently our probation[7] in our temporal capacity. For the information, which we want with regard to our worldly interests is by no means always given us of course, without any care of our own. And we are greatly liable to self-deceit from inward secret prejudices, and also to the deceit of others. So that to be able to judge what is the prudent part, often requires much and difficult consideration. Then after we have judged the very best we can, the evidence upon which we must act, if we will live and act at all, is perpetually doubtful to a very high degree. And the constitution and course of the world in fact is such, as that want of impartial consideration what we have to do, and venturing upon extravagant courses because it is doubtful what will be the consequence, are often naturally, *i. e.* providentially, altogether as fatal, as misconduct occasioned by heedless in-

[7] P. 44, 239, 241, 242.

attention to what we certainly know, or disregarding it from overbearing passion.

Several of the observations here made may well seem strange, perhaps unintelligible, to many good men. But if the persons for whose sake they are made think so—persons who object as above, and throw off all regard to religion under pretence of want of evidence—I desire them to consider again, whether their thinking so be owing to anything unintelligible in these observations, or to their own not having such a sense of religion and serious solicitude about
it, as even their state of scepticism does in all reason 3
require? It ought to be forced upon the reflection of these persons, that our nature and condition necessarily require us, in the daily course of life, to act upon evidence much lower than what is commonly called probable; to guard, not only against what we fully believe will, but also against what we think it supposable may, happen; and to engage in pursuits when the probability is greatly against success, if it be credible, that possibly we may succeed in them.

CHAPTER VII.

OF THE PARTICULAR EVIDENCE FOR CHRISTIANITY.[1]

[Having considered objections against any revelation, and against the Christian revelation particularly, consider now the positive evidence for Christianity, and the objections against that evidence; the whole divisible into two parts—(i.) The evidence from miracles and prophecy; (ii.) The direct and collateral evidence considered as making one argument.

i.

A On miracles as evidence for Christianity, note

1 The Bible gives the same evidence for miraculous as for common history.

a The narrative of miraculous and of common history is equally plain.

[1] [Butler now passes from the truths of Christianity to its evidence. He has met objections against Christianity, he now meets objections against the proof of it. In previous chapters he seeks to free the gospel from groundless objections, and so to leave it to the support of its proper evidence. In this chapter he frees the evidence itself from objections, and so leaves it with its proper force to support the gospel. On the writers referred to in this chapter, see p. ix.]

b The accounts of miracles are quoted as genuine.

c The accuracy of the account of miracles is attested by contemporaneous and by later events.

d And the most obvious explanation of the reception of this history is its truthfulness, so that

e It ought to be received till there is reason for rejecting it.

2 Paul's Epistles, which are proved genuine, are an additional and peculiar proof of the miracles of Christianity:

a Additional, because Paul received the gospel direct from God; and

b Peculiar, because he speaks of a great variety of miracles as wrought by himself and by others, and as admitted.

3 Christianity demands to be received for its miracles—a fact peculiar to it—and it was received at first on that ground.

a The demand is peculiar, for Mohammedanism was not founded upon miracles; and other systems, whether of popery or of paganism, were founded upon alleged miracles, only AFTER they had been instituted, and not BEFORE.

b In part Christianity was received on the ground of its miraculousness, a fact which, under the circumstances, proves the reality of those miracles, and is testimony for them, additional to the testimony of history.

CONCL. Hence there is large historical evidence in favour of Christianity which ought to be credited.

B The *objections* to this reasoning are obvious:

1 Under the influence of enthusiasm men lay down their lives for every kind of folly: Answer,

a Perhaps so, when the follies are matters of opinion; but here the thing attested, in the case of the first Christians, is fact, and for testimony to the reality of facts enthusiasm cannot account.

b And, if it be said that the evidence of *religious facts* is weakened by enthusiasm, answer,

1 Yes, if the facts are in themselves incredible, a thing not shown; and, besides,

2 Religious facts, as attested, are not more liable to the influence of enthusiasm than common facts are to other influences, party spirit, etc., which yet are believed.

2 A mixture of enthusiasm and knavery, it is objected, weakens the evidence for miracles.

That there is this mixture in human nature is certain, but it is seen also in common matters, which yet are believed on testimony

3 However, men have been themselves deluded by pretences to miracles.

Answer. Not more so than by other pretences, of honesty or benevolence, for example.

4 Fabulous miracles have historical evidence; yet,

Answer, Even if this be admitted, that would not prove the falsehood of Christian miracles, even though they furnish a precisely analogous example.

C Conclusions:—

1 From objections, note

a They weaken the evidence but cannot destroy it.

b Nor can that evidence be destroyed but by proof of the untrustworthiness of the witnesses.

c This very mode of speaking implies that there is *something* in the evidence itself; an important reflection on such a subject.

d It should be remembered that the importance of Christianity and its precepts on veracity must have made the early Christians peculiarly careful not to deceive or be deceived.

2 From the *whole argument* it is plain that the proof of miracles is of real weight and sufficient: and so men ought to admit it where there is nothing in religion itself incredible.

D On evidences from prophecy the following remarks are important:—

1 Not perceiving the *whole sense* of a prophecy does not weaken the proof of foresight, nor does the not understanding the whole fulfilment.

2 If a long series of prophecies be applicable to certain events, the applicability proves such an application is intended. This meets the objection, that the application of each prophecy apart may not be apparent, and so was not intended.

Note the analogous case of mythological or satirical writing; and mark, that Old Testament prophecy was understood by the Jews generally as it now is by Christians.

3 A prophecy may be completed in a sense different to the sense of the prophet, and a prophecy may seem applicable to other events than the alleged completion; but neither weakens the evidence, for

a The Scriptures are the work, not of the men who wrote them, but of the Spirit, and the former may not have known all the meaning.

b The applicability to more than one event may have been intended by the Spirit.

Concl. The conclusion is, that this evidence is real, though not perfect, and needs fairness and modesty in weighing it.

ii.

E On other direct and collateral evidence, note

1 *Introduction.* This evidence is peculiarly important, for

a It is what is commonly given us in practice; and

b Such evidence, being circumstantial, is, when taken together, of great weight, and

c Would, *if considered* simply *as matter of fact,* have great influence with unbelievers.

d It is intended then to prove that God has given us a system of natural religion and of revealed; the first ascertainable by reason, and the second not; the latter intended to secure our recovery and holiness.

2 Note what this religion is, as a real or supposed history.

a It teaches the creation of the world as God's world; reveals the Son as Creator.

b It teaches the history of religion in its various aspects.

c It teaches as much of politics as is needed to make the history of religion complete. On all which note 1, 2, 3, 4.

d It gives an account of the origin of mankind, and a thread of history extending over 4000 years, with many particulars which need to be carefully noted, and ending in the establishment of the Christian faith.

3 Let it be asked, "Is this true?" and take, as answer, the following facts; first separately, and then unitedly.

a Natural religion has owed its establishment in a large degree to the Scriptures, as many allow, so that Scripture has claims upon our natural piety. Nor must it be thought that the establishment of natural religion by revelation destroys the proof from reason.

b The first parts of Scripture are of acknowledged antiquity, and its history and chronology credible, both from

1 Common history, and

2 Internal evidence.

c The Jews, the peculiar people of God, owed most of their history to their religion, and preserved (and they alone) the truths of natural religion uncorrupted.

d A Messiah has appeared, fulfilling ancient prophecies, whose religion, sometimes above, but never contrary to reason, became the religion of the world; the Jewish polity in the

mean time destroyed, and the Jews scattered yet preserved; each part, and much more the whole, in fulfilment of prophecies, supplying fresh evidence.

Note further,

1 That, though the immediate facts may be explained on natural principles, the correspondence between these facts and predictions cannot, as in the case of the dispersion of the Jews and the birth of the Messiah.

2 There are to be added many prophecies still in course of fulfilment, the fulfilment of which is highly probable from the fulfilment of prophecy in the past.

e Let all this be considered apart and together, and then add other obvious examples of harmony between prophecy and facts.

F In conclusion, let it be remembered,

1 The force of this evidence depends on the whole taken unitedly, and must be admitted to have great weight.

2 Even as far as it has been here given, the evidence is more than human—miracles, prophecies, other proofs.

3 These proofs, taken together, not only add to the evidence—they multiply it.

4 And, though proofs to the contrary may also be set down, yet in matters of conduct (not in case of events or of speculation) the question of which view is safer is important. A mistake on the one side, in rejecting Christianity, is more dangerous than a mistake on the other, in accepting it: and the more so, as,

5 Christianity is true, not only if one particular fact prove it, but unless all the things herein alleged can reasonably be supposed to be accidental.

6 There being no presumption against Christianity as miraculous, or against its scheme or parts, this evidence, though it may be lessened, cannot be destroyed.]

The presumptions against revelation, and objections against the general scheme of Christianity, and particular things relating to it, being removed; there remains to be considered, what positive evidence we have for the truth of it: chiefly in order to see, what the analogy of Nature suggests with regard to that evidence, and the objections against it: or to see what is, and is allowed to be, the plain natural rule of judgment and of action, in our temporal concerns, in cases where we have the same kind of evidence, and the INTRO

same kind of objections against it, that we have in the case before us.

Now in the evidence of Christianity there seem to be several things of great weight, not reducible to the head, either of miracles, or the completion of prophecy, in the common acceptation of the words. But these two are its direct and fundamental proofs: and those other things, however considerable they are, yet ought never to be urged apart from its direct proofs, but always to be joined with them. Thus the evidence of Christianity will be a long series of things, reaching as it seems, from the beginning of the world to the present time, of great variety and compass, taking in both the direct, and also the collateral, proofs; and making up, all of them together, one argument: the conviction arising from which kind of proof may be compared to what they call *the effect* in architecture or other works of art; a result from a great number of things so and so disposed, and taken into one view. I shall therefore,
i. first, make some observations relating to miracles, and the appearing completions of prophecy; and consider what analogy suggests, in answer to the objections brought against this evidence. And, secondly, I shall endeavour to give some account of the general argument now mentioned,
ii. consisting both of the direct and collateral evidence, considered as making up one argument: this being the kind of proof upon which we determine most questions, of difficulty, concerning common facts, alleged to have happened, or seeming likely to happen; especially questions relating to conduct.

I.

First, I shall make some observations upon the direct proof of Christianity from miracles and prophecy, and upon the objections alleged against it.

A I. Now the following observations relating to the historical evidence of miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, appear to be of great weight.

1 1. The Old Testament affords us the same historical evidence of the miracles of Moses and of the prophets, as of the common civil history of Moses and the kings of Israel;

or, as of the affairs of the Jewish nation. And the *Gospels* and *Acts* afford us the same historical evidence of the miracles of Christ and the apostles, as of the common matters related in them.[2] This indeed could not have been affirmed by any reasonable man, if the authors of these books, like many other historians, had appeared to make an entertaining manner of writing their aim; though they had interspersed miracles in their works, at proper distances and upon proper occasions. These might have animated a dull relation, amused the reader, and engaged his attention. And the same account would naturally have been given of them, as of the speeches and descriptions of such authors: the same account, in a manner, as is to be given, why the poets make use of wonders and prodigies. But the facts, both miraculous and natural, in Scripture, are related in plain unadorned a
narratives; and both of them appear, in all respects, to stand upon the same foot of historical evidence. Further: some parts of Scripture, containing an account of miracles fully sufficient to prove the truth of Christianity, are quoted as genuine, from the age in which they are said to be written, b
down to the present: and no other parts of them, material in the present question, are omitted to be quoted in such manner, as to afford any sort of proof of their not being genuine. And, as common history, when called in question in any instance, may often be greatly confirmed by contemporary or subsequent events more known and acknowledged; and as c
the common Scripture history, like many others, is thus confirmed; so likewise is the miraculous history of it, not only in particular instances, but in general. For the esta-

[2] [Lord Bolingbroke is quoted by Fitzgerald as making the same remark. "The miracles of the Bible are not like those of Livy, detached pieces that do not disturb the civil history, but are intimately connected with all the civil affairs, and make a necessary and inseparable part. The whole history is founded on them; it consists of little else; and if it were not a history of them it would be a history of nothing." This thought has been applied by the author of the 'Restoration of Belief' to the New Testament, and especially to the Epistles, in order to show that the miracles are all so interwoven with the truths of the gospel and the teaching of inspired men, that they cannot be denied without a denial of the whole Christian scheme.]

blishment of the Jewish and Christian religions, which were events contemporary with the miracles related to be wrought in attestation of both, or subsequent to them, these events are just what we should have expected, upon supposition such miracles were really wrought to attest the truth of these religions. These miracles are a satisfactory account of those events: of which no other satisfactory account can be given; nor any account at all, but what is imaginary merely, and invented. It is to be added, that the most obvious, the most easy and direct account of this history, how it came to be written and to be received in the world, as a true history, is, that it really is so; nor can any other account of it be easy and direct. Now, though an account, not at all obvious, but very far-fetched and indirect, may indeed be, and often is, the true account of a matter; yet it cannot be admitted on the authority of its being asserted. Mere guess, supposition, and possibility, when opposed to historical evidence, prove nothing, but that historical evidence is not demonstrative.

Now the just consequence from all this, I think, is, that the Scripture history in general is to be admitted as an authentic genuine history, till somewhat positive be alleged sufficient to invalidate it. But no man will deny the consequence to be, that it cannot be rejected, or thrown by as of no authority, till it can be proved to be of none; even though the evidence now mentioned for its authority were doubtful. This evidence may be confronted by historical evidence on the other side, if there be any: or general incredibility in the things related, or inconsistence in the general turn of the history, would prove it to be of no authority. But since, upon the face of the matter, upon a first and general view, the appearance is, that it is an authentic history; it cannot be determined to be fictitious without some proof that it is so. And the following observations in support of these, and coincident with them, will greatly confirm the historical evidence for the truth of Christianity.

2. The Epistles of St. Paul, from the nature of epistolary writing, and moreover from several of them being written, not to particular persons, but to churches, carry in them evidences of their being genuine, beyond what can be in a

mere historical narrative, left to the world at large.[3] This evidence, joined with that which they have in common with the rest of the New Testament, seems not to leave so much as any particular pretence for denying their genuineness, considered as an ordinary matter of fact, or of criticism: I say *particular* pretence, for *denying* it; because any single fact, of such a kind and such antiquity, may have *general doubts* raised concerning it, from the very nature of human affairs and human testimony. There is also to be mentioned a distinct and particular evidence of the genuineness of the epistle chiefly referred to here, the first to the Corinthians; from the manner in which it is quoted by Clemens Romanus, in an epistle of his own to that church.[4] Now these Epistles afford a proof of Christianity, detached from all others, which (a) is, I think, a thing of weight; and also a proof of a nature (b) and kind peculiar to itself. For,

In them the author declares, that he received the gospel a in general, and the institution of the communion in particular, not from the rest of the apostles, or jointly together with them, but alone, from Christ himself, whom he declares likewise, conformably to the history in the Acts, that he saw after his ascension.[5] So that the testimony of St. Paul is to be considered, as detached from that of the rest of the apostles.

[3] [This hint has been improved and carried out in the case of Paul's Epistles by Paley in his 'Horæ Paulinæ:' in the case of the Acts and the Gospels as compared with each other and with the Epistles, in the 'Horæ Evangelicæ' and 'Horæ Apostolicæ' of Birks. A similar process of reasoning has been adopted by Graves and Blunt in proving the genuineness of the Pentateuch and of other parts of the Old Testament. Indeed, it is not sufficiently remembered that each of the inspired writers gives an independent testimony to the general accuracy of the rest. The Bible is properly a collection of books written under circumstances that left the writers independent, and made collusion impossible.]

[4] Clem. Rom. Ep. i. c. 47. ["Take the Epistle of the blessed Paul the Apostle into your hands. What was it he wrote to you at his first preaching the gospel among you? Verily he did by the Spirit admonish you concerning himself and Cephas and Apollos, because that even then ye had begun to fall into parties and sections among yourselves," etc.—*Cave's Epistles of the Fathers.*]

[5] Gal. i.; 1 Cor. xi. 23, etc.; 1 Cor. xv. 8.

And he declares further, that he was endued with a power
b of working miracles, as what was publicly known to those
very people, speaks of frequent and great variety of miraculous gifts as then subsisting in those very churches, to which he was writing; which he was reproving for several irregularities; and where he had personal opposers: he mentions these gifts incidentally, in the most easy manner, and without effort; by way of reproof to those who had them, for their indecent use of them; and by way of depreciating them, in comparison of moral virtues: in short he speaks to these churches, of these miraculous powers, in the manner any one would speak to another of a thing, which was as familiar and as much known in common to them both, as anything in the world.[6] And this, as hath been observed by several persons, is surely a very considerable thing.

3 3. It is an acknowledged historical fact, that Christianity
offered itself to the world, and demanded to be received,
(a) upon the allegation, *i. e.* as unbelievers would speak, upon
the pretence, of miracles, publicly wrought to attest the
(b) truth of it, in such an age; and that it was actually received
by great numbers in that very age, and upon the professed
belief of the reality of those miracles. And Christianity,
4 including the dispensation of the Old Testament, seems distinguished by this from all other religions. I mean, that this does not appear to be the case with regard to any other: for surely it will not be supposed to lie upon any person, to prove by positive historical evidence, that it was not. It does in no sort appear that Mohammedanism was first received in the world upon the foot of supposed miracles,[7] *i. e.* public ones: for, as revelation is itself miraculous, all pretence to it must necessarily imply some pretence of miracles. And it

[6] Rom. xv. 19; 1 Cor. xii. 8, 9, 10—28, etc., and xiii. 1, 2, 8, and the whole xivth chapter; 2 Cor. xii. 12, 13; Gal. iii. 2, 5.

[7] See the Koran, c. xiii. and c. xvii. [" The infidels say, unless a sign be sent down unto him from the Lord, we will not believe; thou art a preacher only." . . . " Nothing hindered us from sending thee with miracles, except that the former nations have charged them with imposture." Sale's *Trans.* Alleged pagan miracles are examined by Paley in his 'Evidences,' sec. iii.; and more satisfactorily by Campbell, pt. ii. sec. iv.]

is a known fact, that it was immediately, at the very first, propagated by other means. And as particular institutions, whether in paganism or popery, said to be confirmed by miracles after those institutions had obtained, are not to the purpose: so, were there what might be called historical proof, that any of them were introduced by a supposed Divine command, believed to be attested by miracles; these would not be in any wise parallel. For single things of this sort are easy to be accounted for, after parties are formed, and have power in their hands; and the leaders of them are in veneration with the multitude; and political interests are blended with religious claims, and religious distinctions. But before any thing of this kind, for a few persons, and those of the lowest rank, all at once, to bring over such great numbers to a new religion, and get it to be received upon the particular evidence of miracles; this is quite another thing. And I think it will be allowed by any fair adversary, that the fact now mentioned, taking in all the circumstances of it, is peculiar to the Christian religion.[8] However, the

[8] [This fact, that Christianity is the only religion founded on miracles, is insisted upon by Whately ('Christian Evidences'); and is of importance. It helps to get rid of the question, whether miracles are of themselves a conclusive evidence of the divinity of the doctrines they attest. Whether true miracles have ever been wrought in defence of error, as Farmer and others deny, or whether miracles must be themselves tested by the doctrines they support or illustrate, as others affirm, are comparatively unimportant points. . . . In fact, it seems that no religious system claiming our belief is founded on miracles but Christianity.

Though, however, miracles are always evidence of *supernatural*, and probably of *Divine* power, justice is not done to Christianity, unless we connect the miracles of our Lord and his apostles with the great truths they illustrated. Those miracles not only sounded the great bell of the universe—as John Foster phrases it—to call attention, and gave proof of a Divine presence, with the right of adding to previous revelations, they also set forth in a most remarkable way the design of the gospel. They reveal Christ's power over nature, and man, and devils; they show his authority in heaven, on earth, and in hell; they illustrate everywhere his benevolence; they teach that he came to "overthrow a usurpation," and drive the tyrant from the territory he has invaded; while the last, our Lord's resurrection, is a proof of the completeness of his work and

fact itself is allowed, that Christianity obtained, *i. e.* was professed to be received in the world, upon the belief of miracles, immediately in the age in which it is said those miracles were wrought: or that this is what its first converts would have alleged, as the reason for their embracing it. Now certainly it is not to be supposed, that such numbers of men, in the most distant parts of the world, should forsake the religion of their country, in which they had been educated; separate themselves from their friends, particularly in their festival shows and solemnities, to which b the common people are so greatly addicted, and which were of a nature to engage them much more than any thing of that sort amongst us; and embrace a religion, which could not but expose them to many inconveniences, and indeed must have been a giving up the world in a great degree, even from the very first, and before the empire engaged in form against them: it cannot be supposed, that such numbers should make so great, and, to say the least, so inconvenient a change in their whole institution of life, unless they were really convinced of the truth of those miracles, upon the knowledge or belief of which they professed to make it. And it will, I suppose, readily be acknowledged, that the generality of the first converts to Christianity must have believed them: that as by becoming Christians they declared to the world, they were satisfied of the truth of those miracles; so this declaration was to be credited. And this their testimony is the same kind of evidence for those miracles, as if they had put it in writing, and these writings had come down to us. And it is real evidence, because it is of facts, which they had capacity and full opportunity to inform themselves of. It is also distinct from the direct or express historical evidence, though it is of the same kind: and it would be allowed to be distinct in all cases. For were a fact expressly related by one or more ancient historians, and disputed in after ages; that this fact is acknow-

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a pledge of the eternal life he came to reveal. Christ's miracles, in fact, preach parts of the gospel as clearly, as emphatically, as suggestively, to those who carefully study them, as the Epistles of Paul; and the doctrines taught in them form an essential portion of their evidence. See Orig. con. Cel. 1.]

ledged to have been believed by great numbers of the age in which the historian says it was done, would be allowed an additional proof of such fact, quite distinct from the express testimony of the historian. The credulity of mankind is acknowledged: and the suspicions of mankind ought to be acknowledged too; and their backwardness even to believe, and greater still to practise, what makes against their interest.[9] And it must particularly be remembered, that education, and prejudice, and authority, were against Christianity, in the age I am speaking of. So that the immediate conversion of such numbers is a real presumption of somewhat more than human in this matter: I say presumption, for it is not alleged as a proof alone and by itself. Nor need any one of the things mentioned in this chapter be considered as a proof by itself: and yet all of them together may be one of the strongest.[10]

Upon the whole: as there is large historical evidence, both direct and circumstantial, of miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, collected by those who have written upon the subject; it lies upon unbelievers to show why this evidence is not to be credited. This way of speaking is, I think, just; and what persons who write in defence of religion naturally fall into. Yet, in a matter of such unspeakable importance, the proper question is, not whom it lies upon, according to the rules of argument, to maintain or confute objections: but whether there really Conc?

[9] [So one of the early apologists reasons—"Who are they, perhaps you ask—(he is addressing the heathen, and appealing to the example of the first Christians)—tribes, people, nations, the incredulous human race? Had not the thing been public, and in some sort clearer than the light, they would never have given their assent to claims of this nature. Shall we say that the men of those times were inconsiderate, deceitful, stupid, brutish enough to feign having seen what they never saw? and that when they might have lived with you in harmony and amicable union, they chose gratuitous hatred, and to bear an execrable name? . . . Truly, it was because they saw all these things done by Christ and by his heralds, that multitudes, conquered by the force of truth itself, gave themselves to God, nor thought it too great a cost to surrender themselves to you for torture and for death."—*Arnobius*, lib. i., quoted by Stillingfleet, 'Orig. Sac.,' p. 311—12.]

[10] Page 285, etc.

are any, against this evidence, sufficient, in reason, to destroy the credit of it. However, unbelievers seem to take upon them the part of showing that there are.

B They allege, that numberless enthusiastic people, in dif-
1 ferent ages and countries, expose themselves to the same difficulties which the primitive Christians did; and are ready to give up their lives for the most idle follies imaginable. But it is not very clear, to what purpose this objection is brought. For every one, surely, in every case, must distinguish between opinions and facts. And though testi-
a mony is no proof of enthusiastic opinions, or of any opinions at all; yet it is allowed, in all other cases, to be a proof of facts. And a person's laying down his life in attestation of facts or of opinions is the strongest proof of his believing them. And if the apostles and their contemporaries did believe the facts, in attestation of which they exposed themselves to sufferings and death; this their belief, or rather knowledge, must be a proof of those facts: for they were such as came under the observation of their senses. And though it is not of equal weight, yet it is of weight, that the martyrs of the next age, notwithstanding they were not eyewitnesses of those facts, as were the apostles and their contemporaries, had, however, full opportunity to inform themselves whether they were true or not, and gave equal proof of their believing them to be true.

b But enthusiasm, it is said, greatly weakens the evidence of testimony even for facts, in matters relating to religion; some seem to think it totally and absolutely destroys the evidence of testimony upon this subject. And indeed the powers of enthusiasm, and of diseases too, which operate in a like manner, are very wonderful in particular instances. But if great numbers of men, not appearing in any peculiar degree weak, nor under any peculiar suspicion of negligence, affirm that they saw and heard such things plainly with their eyes and their ears, and are admitted to be in earnest; such testimony is evidence of the strongest kind
1 we can have, for any matter of fact. Yet possibly it may be overcome, strong as it is, by incredibility in the things thus attested, or by contrary testimony. And in an instance where one thought it was so overcome, it might be just to consider, how far such evidence could be accounted for by

enthusiasm; for it seems as if no other imaginable account were to be given of it. But till such incredibility be shown, or contrary testimony produced, it cannot surely be expected, that so far-fetched, so indirect and wonderful an account of such testimony, as that of enthusiasm must be; an account so strange, that the generality of mankind can scarce be made to understand what is meant by it: it cannot, I say, be expected, that such account will be admitted of such evidence; when there is this direct, easy, and obvious account of it, that people really saw and heard a thing not incredible, which they affirm sincerely and with full assurance, they did see and hear. Granting then that enthusiasm is not (strictly speaking) an absurd, but a possible account of such testimony; it is manifest, that the very mention of it goes upon the previous supposition that the things so attested are incredible: and therefore need not be considered, till they are shown to be so. Much less need it be considered, after the contrary has been proved. And I think it has been proved, to full satisfaction, that there is no incredibility in a revelation, in general; or in
such an one as the Christian, in particular. However, as 1
religion is supposed peculiarly liable to enthusiasm, it may just be observed that prejudices almost without number and without name, romance, affection, humour, a desire to engage attention, or to surprise, the party-spirit, custom, little competitions, unaccountable likings and dislikings; these influence men strongly in common matters. And as these prejudices are often scarce known or reflected upon by the persons themselves who are influenced by them, they are to be considered as influences of a like kind to enthusiasm. Yet human testimony in common matters is naturally and justly believed notwithstanding.

It is intimated further, in a more refined way of observ- 2
ation, that though it should be proved, that the apostles and first Christians could not, in some respects, be deceived themselves, and, in other respects, cannot be thought to have intended to impose upon the world; yet it will not follow, that their general testimony is to be believed, though truly handed down to us: because they might still in part, *i. e.* in other respects, be deceived themselves, and in part also designedly impose upon others; which, it is added, is

a thing very credible, from that mixture of real enthusiasm, and real knavery, to be met with in the same characters. And, I must confess, I think the matter of fact contained in this observation upon mankind is not to be denied; and that somewhat very much akin to it is often supposed in Scripture as a very common case, and most severely reproved.[11] But it were to have been expected, that persons capable of applying this observation as applied in the objection, might also frequently have met with the like mixed character, in instances where religion was quite out of the case. The thing plainly is, that mankind are naturally endowed with reason, or a capacity of distinguishing between truth and falsehood; and as naturally they are endued with veracity, or a regard to truth in what they say: but from many occasions they are liable to be prejudiced and biassed and deceived themselves, and capable of intending to deceive others, in every different degree: insomuch that as we are all liable to be deceived by prejudice, so likewise it seems to be not an uncommon thing, for persons, who, from their regard to truth, would not invent a lie entirely without any foundation at all, to propagate it with heightening circumstances, after it is once invented and set agoing. And others, though they would not *propagate* a lie, yet, which is a lower degree of falsehood, will let it pass without contradiction. But, notwithstanding all this, human testimony remains still a natural ground of assent; and this assent a natural principle of action.

3 It is objected further, that however it has happened, the *fact* is, that mankind have, in different ages, been strangely deluded with pretences to miracles and wonders. But it is by no means to be admitted, that they have been oftener, or are at all more liable to be, deceived by these pretences, than by others.

4 It is added, that there is a very considerable degree of historical evidence for miracles, which are, on all hands, acknowledged to be fabulous. But suppose there were even *the like* historical evidence for these, to what there is for those alleged in proof of Christianity, which yet is in nowise

[11] [See Butler's Sermons on Balaam and Self-deceit, and Warburton's 'Divine Legation,' viii. §. vi. Fitzg.]

ppose this; the consequence would not be, ce of the latter is not to be admitted. Nor in the world, who, in common cases, would

For what would such a conclusion really ; this, that evidence, confuted by contrary y way overbalanced, destroys the credibility ice, neither confuted, nor overbalanced? To ause there is, if there were, like evidence from miracles acknowledged false, as for those in Christianity, therefore the evidence in the ot to be credited; this is the same as to argue, nen of equally good reputation had given ferent cases no way connected, and one of . convicted of perjury, this confuted the testi- her.

whole, then, the general observation, that res are so liable to be deceived, from enthu- on, and principles equivalent to enthusiasm in ers, and in both from negligence; and that pable of dishonestly endeavouring to deceive oes indeed weaken the evidence of testimony but does not destroy it in any. And these pear, to different men, to weaken the evidence in different degrees: in degrees proportionable ations they have made, or the notions they have n up, concerning the weakness and negligence ty of mankind; or concerning the powers of nd prejudices equivalent to it. But it seems to ple do not know what they say, who affirm to destroy the evidence from testimony, which ie truth of Christianity. Nothing can destroy of testimony in any case, but a proof or hat persons are not competent judges of the h they give testimony; or that they are actually ndirect influence in giving it, in such particular his be made out, the *natural* laws of human ire, that testimony be admitted. It can never to overthrow direct historical evidence, inde- , that there are so many principles, from whence ile to be deceived themselves, and disposed to

deceive others, especially in matters of religion, that one knows not what to believe. And it is surprising persons can help reflecting, that this very manner of speaking
c supposes they are not satisfied that there is nothing in the evidence, of which they speak thus; or that they can avoid observing, if they do make this reflection, that it is, on such a subject, a very material one.[12]

And over against all these objections is to be set the importance of Christianity, as what must have engaged the attention of its first converts, so as to have rendered them less liable to be deceived from carelessness, than they would
d in common matters; and likewise the strong obligations to veracity, which their religion laid them under: so that the first and most obvious presumption is, that they could not be deceived themselves, nor would deceive others. And this presumption, in this degree, is peculiar to the testimony we have been considering.

In argument, assertions are nothing in themselves, and have an air of positiveness, which sometimes is not very easy; yet they are necessary, and necessary to be repeated; in order to connect a discourse, and distinctly to lay before
2 the view of the reader what is proposed to be proved, and what is left as proved. Now the conclusion from the foregoing observations is, I think, beyond all doubt, this: that unbelievers must be forced to admit the external evidence for Christianity, *i. e.* the proof of miracles wrought to attest it, to be of real weight and very considerable; though they cannot allow it to be sufficient to convince them of the reality of those miracles. And as they must, in all reason, admit this; so it seems to me, that upon consideration they would, in fact, admit it; those of them, I mean, who know anything at all of the matter: in like manner as persons, in many cases, own they see strong evidence from testimony for the truth of things, which yet they cannot be convinced are true: cases, suppose, where there is contrary testimony; or things which they think, whether with or without reason, to be incredible. But there is no testimony contrary to that which we have been consi

[12] See the foregoing chapter.

dering: and it has been fully proved, that there is no incredibility in Christianity in general, or in any part of it.

II. As to the evidence of Christianity from prophecy, D
I shall only make some few general observations, which are suggested by the analogy of Nature; *i. e.* by the acknowledged natural rules of judging in common matters, concerning evidence of a like kind to this from prophecy.

1. The obscurity or unintelligibleness of one part of a 1
prophecy does not, in any degree, invalidate the proof of foresight, arising from the appearing completion of those other parts which are understood. For the case is evidently the same, as if those parts which are not understood were lost, or not written at all, or written in an unknown tongue. Whether this observation be commonly attended to or not, it is so evident, that one can scarce bring oneself to set down an instance in common matters to exemplify it. However, suppose a writing, partly in cipher and partly in plain words at length; and that in the part one understood, there appeared mention of several known facts; it would never come into any man's thoughts to imagine, that if he understood the whole, perhaps he might find, that those facts were not in reality known by the writer. Indeed, both in this example, and the thing intended to be exemplified by it, our not understanding the whole (the whole, suppose, of a sentence or a paragraph) might sometimes occasion a doubt, whether one understood the literal meaning of such a part: but this comes under another consideration.

For the same reason, though a man should be incapable, for want of learning, or opportunities of inquiry, or from not having turned his studies this way, even so much as to judge, whether particular prophecies have been throughout completely fulfilled; yet he may see, in general, that they have been fulfilled to such a degree, as, upon very good ground, to be convinced of foresight more than human in such prophecies, and of such events being intended by them. For the same reason also, though by means of the deficiencies in civil history, and the different accounts of historians, the most learned should not be able to make out to satisfaction, that such parts of the prophetic history have been minutely and throughout fulfilled; yet a very strong

proof of foresight may arise, from that general completion of them, which is made out: as much proof of foresight, perhaps, as the giver of prophecy intended should ever be afforded by such parts of prophecy.

2. A long series of prophecy being applicable to such and such events, is itself a proof that it was intended of them: as the rules, by which we naturally judge and determine, in common cases parallel to this, will show. This observation I make in answer to the common objection against the application of the prophecies, that, considering each of them distinctly by itself, it does not at all appear, that they were intended of those particular events, to which they are applied by Christians;[13] and therefore it is to be supposed, that, if they meant anything, they were intended of other events unknown to us, and not of these at all.

Now there are two kinds of writing, which bear a great resemblance to prophecy, with respect to the matter before us: the mythological, and the satirical, where the satire is, to a certain degree, concealed. And a man might be assured, that he understood what an author intended by a fable or parable, related without any application or moral, merely from seeing it to be easily capable of such application, and that such a moral might naturally be deduced from it. And he might be fully assured, that such persons and events were intended in a satirical writing, merely from its being applicable to them. And, agreeably to the last observation, he might be in a good measure satisfied of it, though he were not enough informed in affairs, or in the story of such persons, to understand half the satire. For,

[13] [Since Butler's time, the whole subject of prophecy has been diligently studied, so that though the principles he here lays down are in themselves sound, and are needed in the interpretation of some obscure and of unfulfilled predictions, yet most of prophetic Scripture is sufficiently plain to supply direct evidence of a Divine origin. "The spirit of prophecy is the testimony of Jesus;" his first coming to suffer, and the subsequent establishment of his kingdom are foreshadowed in the history of the ancient people of God, are the general principles to be kept in view. The whole subject has been discussed by Hurd on Prophecy, and by Davison; some of the principal conclusions may be seen in 'The Bible Hand-book,' chap. iv., sec. 8. Rel. Tr. Soc.]

his satisfaction, that he understood the meaning, the intended meaning, of these writings, would be greater or less in proportion as he saw the general turn of them to be capable of such application; and in proportion to the number of particular things capable of it. And thus, if a long series of prophecy is applicable to the present state of the church, and to the political situations of the kingdoms of the world, some thousand years after these prophecies were delivered, and a long series of prophecy delivered before the coming of Christ is applicable to him; these things are in themselves a proof, that the prophetic history was intended of him, and of those events: in proportion as the general turn of it is capable of such application, and to the number and variety of particular prophecies capable of it. And though, in all just way of consideration, the appearing completion of prophecies is to be allowed to be thus explanatory of, and to determine, their meaning; yet it is to be remembered further, that the ancient Jews applied the prophecies, to a Messiah before his coming, in much the same manner as Christians do now:[14] and that the primitive Christians interpreted the prophecies respecting the state of the church and of the world in the last ages, in the sense which the event seems to confirm and verify. And from these things it may be made appear:

3. That the showing even to a high probability, if that could be, that the prophets thought of some other events, in such and such predictions, and not those at all which Christians allege to be completions of those predictions; or that such and such prophecies are capable of being applied to other events than those to which Christians apply them —that this would not confute or destroy the force of the argument from prophecy, even with regard to those very instances. For, observe how this matter really is. If one knew such a person to be the sole author of such a book, and was certainly assured, or satisfied to any degree, that one knew the whole of what he intended in it; one should be assured or satisfied to such degree, that one knew the 3

[14] [Lyall has shown that the prophecies applied in the New Testament to our Lord were understood by the ancient Jews to apply to the coming Messiah. See *Propædia Prophetica.*]

whole meaning of that book: for the meaning of a book is nothing but the meaning of the author. But if one knew a person to have compiled a book out of memoirs, which he received from another, of vastly superior knowledge in the subject of it, especially if it were a book full of great intricacies and difficulties; it would in nowise follow, that one knew the whole meaning of the book, from knowing the whole meaning of the compiler: for the original memoirs, *i. e.* the author of them, might have, and there would be no degree of presumption, in many cases, against supposing him to have, some further meaning than the compiler saw. To say then, that the Scriptures, and the things contained in them, can have no other or further meaning than those persons thought or had, who first recited or wrote them;[15] is evidently saying, that those persons were the original, proper, and sole authors of those books, *i. e.* that they are not inspired: which is absurd, whilst the authority of these books is under examination; *i. e.* till you have determined they are of no Divine authority at all. Till this be determined, it must in all reason be supposed, not indeed that they have, for this is taking for granted that they are inspired; but that they may have, some further meaning than what the compilers saw or understood. And, upon this supposition, it is supposable also, that this further meaning may be fulfilled. Now events corresponding to prophecies, interpreted in a different meaning from that in which the prophets are supposed to have understood them; this affords, in a manner, the same proof, that this different sense was originally intended, as it would have afforded, if the prophets had not understood their predictions in the sense it is supposed they did; because there is no presumption of their sense of them being the whole sense of them. And it has been already shown, that the apparent completions of prophecy must be allowed to be explanatory of its meaning.

b So that the question is, whether a series of prophecy has been fulfilled, in a natural or proper, *i. e.* in any real, sense of the words of it. For such completion is equally a proof of foresight more than human, whether the prophets are, or are not, supposed to have understood it in a different sense.

[15] [See Note 5, chap. iii. pt. ii.]

I say, supposed; for though I think it clear, that the prophets did not understand the full meaning of their predictions; it is another question, how far they thought they did, and in what sense they understood them.

Hence may be seen, to how little purpose those persons busy themselves who endeavour to prove, that the prophetic history is applicable to events of the age in which it was written, or of ages before it. Indeed to have proved this, before there was any appearance of a further completion of it, might have answered some purpose; for it might have prevented the expectation of any such further completion. Thus could Porphyry have shown, that some principal parts of the book of Daniel, for instance, the seventh verse of the seventh chapter, which the Christians interpreted of the latter ages, was applicable to events, which happened before or about the age of Antiochus Epiphanes; this might have prevented them from expecting any further completion of it. And unless there was then, as I think there must have been, external evidence concerning that book, more than is come down to us; such a discovery might have been a stumbling-block in the way of Christianity itself; considering the authority which our Saviour [16] has given to the book of Daniel, and how much the general scheme of Christianity presupposes the truth of it. But even this discovery, had there been any such [17], would be of very little weight with reasonable men now; if this passage, thus applicable to events before the age of Porphyry, appears to be applicable also to events which succeeded the dissolution of the Roman empire. I mention this, not at all as intending to insinuate, that the division of this empire into ten parts, for it plainly was divided into about that number, were, alone and by itself, of any moment in verifying the prophetic history: but only as an example of the thing I am speaking

[16] [Matt. xxiv. 15.]

[17] It appears, that Porphyry did nothing worth mentioning in this way. For Jerome on the place says, *Duas posteriores bestias—in uno Macedonum regno ponit.* And as to the ten kings; *Decem reges enumerat, qui fuerunt sævissimi: ipsosque reges non unius ponit regni, verbi gratia, Macedoniæ, Syriæ, Asiæ, et Ægypti; sed de diversis regnis unum efficit regum ordinem.* And in this way of interpretation, any thing may be made of any thing.

of. And thus upon the whole, the matter of inquiry evidently must be, as above put, Whether the prophecies are applicable to Christ, and to the present state of the world and of the church: applicable in such a degree, as to imply foresight: not whether they are capable of any other application; though I know no pretence for saying the general turn of them is capable of any other.

4. These observations are, I think, just; and the evidence referred to in them real: though there may be people who will not accept of such imperfect information from Scripture. Some too have not integrity and regard enough to truth, to attend to evidence, which keeps the mind in doubt, perhaps perplexity, and which is much of a different sort from what they expected. And it plainly requires a degree of modesty and fairness, beyond what every one has, for a man to say, not to the world, but to himself, that there is a real appearance of somewhat of great weight in this matter, though he is not able thoroughly to satisfy himself about it; but it shall have its influence upon him, in proportion to its appearing reality and weight. It is much more easy, and more falls in with the negligence, presumption, and wilfulness of the generality, to determine at once, with a decisive air, There is nothing in it. The prejudices arising from that absolute contempt and scorn, with which this evidence is treated in the world, I do not mention. For what indeed can be said to persons, who are weak enough in their understandings to think this any presumption against it; or, if they do not, are yet weak enough in their temper to be influenced by such prejudices, upon such a subject?

II.

I shall now, secondly, endeavour to give some account of the general argument for the truth of Christianity, consisting both of the direct and circumstantial evidence, considered as making up one argument. Indeed to state and examine this argument fully, would be a work much beyond the compass of this whole treatise; nor is so much as a proper abridgment of it to be expected here. Yet the present subject requires to have some brief account of it given. For it is the kind of evidence, upon which most questions of

difficulty, in common practice, are determined: evidence a
arising from various coincidences, which support and
confirm each other, and in this manner prove, with more or
less certainty, the point under consideration. And I choose
to do it also: first, because it seems to be of the greatest
importance, and not duly attended to by every one, that the
proof of revelation is, not some direct and express things b
only, but a great variety of circumstantial things also; and
though each of these direct and circumstantial things is
indeed to be considered separately, yet they are afterwards
to be joined together; for that the proper force of the evi-
dence consists in the result of those several things, con-
sidered in their respects to each other, and united into one
view: and in the next place, because it seems to me, that
the matters of fact here set down, which are acknowledged
by unbelievers, must be acknowledged by them also to c
contain together a degree of evidence of great weight, if they
could be brought to lay these several things before them-
selves distinctly, and then with attention consider them
together; instead of that cursory thought of them, to which
we are familiarized. For being familiarized to the cursory
thought of things as really hinders the weight of them
from being seen, as from having its due influence upon
practice.

The thing asserted, and the truth of which is to be
inquired into, is this: That over and above our reason and
affections, which God has given us for the information of
our judgment and the conduct of our lives, he has also, by
external revelation, given us an account of himself and his
moral government over the world, implying a future state
of rewards and punishments; *i. e.* hath revealed the system
of natural religion: for natural religion may be externally[19]
revealed by God, as the ignorant may be taught it by man-
kind their fellow-creatures—that God, I say, has given us
the evidence of revelation, as well as the evidence of reason,
to ascertain this moral system; together with an account of
a particular dispensation of Providence, which reason could d
no way have discovered, and a particular institution of
religion founded on it, for the recovery of mankind out of

[19] P. 154, etc.

their present wretched condition and raising them to the perfection and final happiness of their nature.

2 This revelation, whether real or supposed, may be considered as wholly historical. For prophecy is nothing but the history of events before they come to pass; doctrines also are matters of fact; and precepts come under the same notion. And the general design of Scripture, which contains in it this revelation, thus considered as historical, may be said to be, to give us an account of the world, in this one single view as God's world: by which it appears essentially distinguished from all other books, so far as I have found,
a except such as are copied from it. It begins with an account of God's creation of the world, in order to ascertain, and distinguish from all others, who is the object of our worship, by what he has done: in order to ascertain, who he is, concerning whose providence, commands, promises, and threatenings, this sacred book, all along, treats; the Maker and Proprietor of the world, he whose creatures we are, the God of Nature: in order likewise to distinguish him from the idols of the nations, which are either imaginary beings, *i. e.* no beings at all; or else part of that creation, the historical relation of which is here given. And St. John, not improbably, with an eye to this Mosaic account of the creation, begins his Gospel with an account of our Saviour's pre-existence, and that *all things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made*:[19] agreeably to the doctrine of St. Paul, that *God created all things by Jesus Christ*.[20] This being premised, the Scripture, taken together, seems to profess to contain a kind of an abridgment of the history of the world, in the view just now mentioned: that is, a general account of the condition of religion and its professors, during the continuance of that apostasy from God, and state of wickedness, which it every where supposes the
b world to lie in. And this account of the state of religion carries with it some brief account of the political state of things, as religion is affected by it. Revelation indeed considers the common affairs of this world, and what is going on in it, as a mere scene of distraction; and cannot be supposed to concern itself with foretelling at what time Rome, or Baby-

[19] John i. 3. [20] Eph. iii. 9

lon, or Greece, or any particular place, should be the most conspicuous seat of that tyranny and dissoluteness, which all places equally aspire to be; cannot, I say, be supposed to give any account of this wild scene for its own sake.[21] But it seems to contain some very general account of the chief governments of the world, as the general state of religion has been, is, or shall be, affected by them, from the first transgression, and during the whole interval of the world's continuing in its present state, to a certain future period, spoken of both in the Old and New Testament, very distinctly, and in great variety of expression: *The times of the restitution of all things*:[22] when *the mystery of God shall be finished, as he hath declared to his servants the prophets*:[23] when *the God of heaven shall set up a kingdom, which shall never be destroyed: and the kingdom shall not be left to other people*;[24] as it is represented to be during this apostasy, but *judgment shall be given to the saints*,[25] and *they shall reign*:[26] *and the kingdom and dominion, and the greatness of the kingdom under the whole heaven, shall be given to the people of the saints of the Most High.*[27]

Upon this general view of the Scripture, I would remark,
how great a length of time the whole relation takes up, near 1
six thousand years of which are past; and how great a
variety of things it treats of; the natural and moral system 2
or history of the world, including the time when it was formed, all contained in the very first book, and evidently written in a rude and unlearned age; and in subsequent books, the various common and prophetic history, and the particular dispensation of Christianity. Now all this to-
gether gives the largest scope for criticism; and for confu- 3
tation of what is capable of being confuted, either from reason, or from common history, or from any inconsistence in its several parts. And it is a thing which deserves, I think, to be mentioned, that whereas some imagine the supposed doubtfulness of the evidence for revelation implies

[21] ['Scripture is an inspired history of religion, and of other things as religion is affected by them. Idolatrous nations are introduced, not as independently important, but as influencing the church, or as influenced by it.'—*Bible Hand-book*, p. 118.]

[22] Acts iii. 21. [23] Rev. x. 7.
[24] Dan. ii. 44. [25] Dan. vii. 22.
[26] Rev. xxii. 5. [27] Dan. vii. 27.

a positive argument that it is not true; it appears, on the contrary, to imply a positive argument that it is true. For, could any common relation, of such an antiquity, extent, and variety (for in these things the stress of what I am now observing lies), be proposed to the examination of the world; that it could not, in an age of knowledge and liberty, be confuted, or shown to have nothing in it, to the satisfaction of reasonable men; this would be thought a strong presumptive proof of its truth. And indeed it must be a proof of it, just in proportion to the probability, that if it were false, it might be shown to be so; and this, I think, is scarce pretended to be shown, but upon principles and in ways of arguing, which have been clearly obviated.[28] Nor does it at all appear, that any set of men, who believe natural religion, are of the opinion, that Christianity has been thus confuted. But to proceed.

Together with the moral system of the world, the Old Testament contains a chronological account of the beginning of it, and from thence, an unbroken genealogy of mankind for many ages before common history begins; and carried on as much further as to make up a continued thread of history of the length of between three and four thousand years. It contains an account of God's making a covenant with a particular nation, that they should be his people, and he would be their God, in a peculiar sense; of his often interposing miraculously in their affairs; giving them the promise, and, long after, the possession, of a particular country; assuring them of the greatest national prosperity in it, if they would worship him, in opposition to the idols which the rest of the world worshipped, and obey his commands; and threatening them with unexampled punishments, if they disobeyed him, and fell into the general idolatry: insomuch that this one nation should continue to be the observation and the wonder of all the world. It declares particularly, that *God would scatter them among all people, from one end of the earth unto the other*: but that, *when they should return unto the Lord their God, he would have compassion upon them, and gather them from all the nations, whither he had scattered them*: that *Israel should be saved in the Lord*

[28] Chap. ii. iii. etc.

with an everlasting salvation; and not be ashamed nor confounded world without end. And as some of these promises are conditional, others are as absolute as anything can be expressed: that the time should come, when *the people should be all righteous, and inherit the land for ever:* that *though God would make a full end of all nations whither he had scattered them, yet would he not make a full end of them:* that *he would bring again the captivity of his people Israel, and plant them upon their land, and they should be no more pulled up out of their land:* that *the seed of Israel should not cease from being a nation for ever.*[29] It foretells, that God would raise them up a particular person, in whom all his promises should finally be fulfilled—the Messiah, who should be, in a high and eminent sense, their anointed Prince and Saviour. This was foretold in such a manner, as raised a general expectation of such a person in the nation, as appears from the New Testament, and is an acknowledged fact; an expectation of his coming at such a particular time before any one appeared claiming to be that person, and when there was no ground for such an expectation but from the prophecies: which expectation, therefore, must in all reason be presumed to be explanatory of those prophecies, if there were any doubt about their meaning. It seems moreover to foretell, that this person should be rejected by that nation, to whom he had been so long promised, and though he was so much desired by them.[30] And it expressly foretells, that he should be the Saviour of the Gentiles; and even that the completion of the scheme, contained in this book, and then begun, and in its progress, should be somewhat so great, that, in comparison with it, the restoration of the Jews alone would be but of small account. *It is a light thing that thou shouldest be my servant to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give thee for a light to the Gentiles, that thou mayest be my salvation unto the end of the earth.* And, *In the last days, the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains, and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it: for out of Zion shall go forth the law, and the*

[29] Deut. xxviii. 64. xxx. 2, 3; Isa. xlv. 17. lx. 21; Jer. xxx. 11 xlvi. 28; Amos ix. 14, 15; Jer. xxxi. 36.

[30] Is. viii. 14, 15; xlix. 5, ch. liii.; Mal. i. 10, 11, and ch. iii.

word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And he shall judge among the nations; and the Lord alone shall be exalted in that day. And the idols he shall utterly abolish.[31] The Scripture further contains an account, that at the time the Messiah was expected, a person rose up, in this nation, claiming to be that Messiah, to be the person, whom all the prophecies referred to, and in whom they should centre: that he spent some years in a continued course of miraculous works; and endued his immediate disciples and followers with a power of doing the same, as a proof of the truth of that religion, which he commissioned them to publish: that, invested with this authority and power, they made numerous converts in the remotest countries, and settled and established his religion in the world; to the end of which the Scripture professes to give a prophetic account of the state of this religion amongst mankind.

3 Let us now suppose a person utterly ignorant of history, to have all this related to him out of the Scripture. Or suppose such an one, having the Scripture put into his hands, to remark these things in it, not knowing but that the whole, even its civil history, as well as the other parts of it, might be, from beginning to end, an entire invention; and to ask, What truth was in it, and whether the revelation here related was real, or a fiction? And, instead of a direct answer, suppose him, all at once, to be told the following confessed facts; and then to unite them into one view.

a Let him first be told, in how great a degree the profession and establishment of natural religion, the belief that there is one God to be worshipped, that virtue is his law, and that mankind shall be rewarded and punished hereafter, as they obey and disobey it here; in how very great a degree, I say, the profession and establishment of this moral system in the world is owing to the revelation, whether real or supposed, contained in this book; the establishment of this moral system, even in those countries which do not acknowledge the proper authority of the Scripture.[32] Let him be

[31] Is. xlix. 6. ch. ii. ch. xi. ch. lvi. 7; Mal. i. 11. To which must be added, the other prophecies of the like kind, several in the New Testament, and very many in the Old; which describe what shall be the completion of the revealed plan of Providence.

[32] Page 233.

told also, what number of nations do acknowledge its proper authority. Let him then take in the consideration, of what importance religion is to mankind. And upon these things he might, I think, truly observe, that this supposed revelation's obtaining and being received in the world, with all the circumstances and effects of it, considered together as one event, is the most conspicuous and important event in the story of mankind: that a book of this nature, and thus promulged and recommended to our consideration, demands, as if by a voice from heaven, to have its claim most seriously examined into; and that, before such examination, to treat it with any kind of scoffing and ridicule, is an offence against natural piety. But it is to be remembered, that how much soever the establishment of natural religion in the world is owing to the Scripture-revelation, this does not destroy the proof of religion from reason, any more than the proof of Euclid's Elements is destroyed, by a man's knowing or thinking, that he should never have seen the truth of the several propositions contained in it, nor had those propositions come into his thoughts, but for that mathematician.

Let such a person as we are speaking of be, in the next place, informed of the acknowledged antiquity of the first parts of this book; and that its chronology, its account of the time when the earth, and the several parts of it, were first peopled with human creatures, is no way contradicted, but is really confirmed, by the natural and civil history of the world, collected from common historians, from the state of the earth, and from the late invention of arts and sciences. And as the Scripture contains an unbroken thread of common and civil history, from the creation to the captivity, for between three and four thousand years; let the person we are speaking of be told, in the next place, that this general history, as it is not contradicted, but is confirmed by profane history as much as there would be reason to expect, upon supposition of its truth; so there is nothing in the whole history *itself*, to give any reasonable ground of suspicion of its not being, in the general, a faithful and literally true genealogy of men, and series of things. I speak here only of the common Scripture-history, or of the course of ordinary events related in it, as distinguished from

miracles and from the prophetic history. In all the Scripture-narrations of this kind, following events arise out of foregoing ones as in all other histories. There appears nothing related as done in any age not conformable to the manners of that age; nothing in the account of a succeeding age, which, one would say, could not be true, or was improbable, from the account of things in the preceding one. There is nothing in the characters, which would raise a thought of their being
2 feigned; but all the internal marks imaginable of their being real. It is to be added also, that mere genealogies, bare narratives of the number of years, which persons called by such and such names lived, do not carry the face of fiction; perhaps do carry some presumption of veracity: and all unadorned narratives, which have nothing to surprise, may be thought to carry somewhat of the like presumption too. And the domestic and the political history is plainly credible. There may be incidents in Scripture, which, taken alone in the naked way they are told, may appear strange; especially to persons of other manners, temper, education; but there are also incidents of undoubted truth, in many or most persons' lives, which, in the same circumstances, would appear to the full as strange[33]. There may be mistakes of transcribers, there may be other real or seeming mistakes, not easy to be particularly accounted for: but there are certainly no more things of this kind in the Scripture, than what were to have been expected in books of such antiquity; and nothing, in any wise, sufficient to discredit the general narrative. Now, that a history claiming to commence from the creation, and extending, in one continual series, through so great a length of time and variety of events, should have such appearances of reality and truth in its whole contexture, is surely a very remarkable circumstance in its favour. And as all this is applicable to the common history of the New Testament, so there is further credibility, and a very high one, given to it by profane authors: many of these writing of the same times, and confirming the truth of customs and events which are incidentally as well as more purposely mentioned in it. And this credibility of the

[33] [Archbishop Whately has presented this thought in a practical form in the 'Historic Doubts' concerning Napoleon Bonaparte.]

common Scripture-history, gives some credibility to its miraculous history; especially as this is interwoven with the common, so as that they imply each other, and both together make up one relation.

Let it then be more particularly observed to this person, c
that it is an acknowledged matter of fact, which is indeed implied in the foregoing observation, that there was such a nation as the Jews, of the greatest antiquity, whose government and general polity was founded on the law, here related to be given them by Moses as from heaven: that natural religion, though with rites additional yet no way contrary to it, was their established religion, which cannot be said of the Gentile world: and that their very being as a nation, depended upon their acknowledgment of one God, the God of the universe. For, suppose in their captivity in Babylon, they had gone over to the religion of their conquerors, there would have remained no bond of union, to keep them a distinct people. And whilst they were under their own kings, in their own country, a total apostasy from God would have been the dissolution of their whole government. They in such a sense nationally acknowledged and worshipped the Maker of heaven and earth, when the rest of the world were sunk in idolatry, as rendered them, in fact, the peculiar people of God. And this so remarkable an establishment and preservation of natural religion amongst them, seems to add some peculiar credibility to the historical evidence for the miracles of Moses and the prophets: because these miracles are a full satisfactory account of this event, which plainly wants to be accounted for, and cannot otherwise.

Let this person, supposed wholly ignorant of history, be d
acquainted further, that one claiming to be the Messiah, of Jewish extraction, rose up at the time when this nation, from the prophecies above mentioned, expected the Messiah: that he was rejected, as it seemed to have been foretold he should, by the body of the people, under the direction of their rulers: that in the course of a very few years, he was believed on and acknowledged as the promised Messiah, by great numbers among the Gentiles, agreeably to the prophecies of Scripture, yet not upon the evidence of prophecy, but of

miracles[34], of which miracles we also have strong historical evidence; (by which I mean here no more than must be acknowledged by unbelievers; for let pious frauds and follies be admitted to weaken, it is absurd to say they destroy, our evidence of miracles wrought in proof of Christianity)[35]: that this religion approving itself to the reason of mankind, and carrying its own evidence with it, so far as reason is a judge of its system, and being no way contrary to reason in those parts of it which require to be believed upon the mere authority of its Author; that this religion, I say, gradually spread and supported itself for some hundred years, not only without any assistance from temporal power, but under constant discouragements, and often the bitterest persecutions from it; and then became the religion of the world: that in the mean time, the Jewish nation and government were destroyed in a very remarkable manner, and the people carried away captive and dispersed through the most distant countries; in which state of dispersion they have remained fifteen hundred years; and that they remain a numerous people, united amongst themselves, and distinguished from the rest of the world, as they were in the days of Moses, by the profession of his law; and everywhere looked upon in a manner, which one scarce knows how distinctly to express but in the words of the prophetic account of it, given so many ages before it came to pass; *Thou shalt become an astonishment, a proverb, and a byword, among all nations whither the Lord shall lead thee.*[36]

The appearance of a standing miracle, in the Jews remaining a distinct people in their dispersion, and the confirmation which this event appears to give to the truth of revelation, may be thought to be answered, by their religion's forbidden them intermarriages with those of any other, and prescribing them a great many peculiarities in their food, by which they are debarred from the means of incorporating with the people in whose countries they live. This is not, I think, a satisfactory account of that which it pretends to account for. But what does it pretend to account for? The correspondence between this event and

[34] P. 253, etc. [35] P. 262, etc.

[36] Deut. xxviii. 37.

the prophecies; or the coincidence of both with a long dispensation of Providence, of a peculiar nature, towards that people formerly? No. It is only the event itself, which is offered to be thus accounted for; which single event taken alone, abstracted from all such correspondence and coincidence, perhaps would not have appeared miraculous: but that correspondence and coincidence may be so, though the event itself be supposed not. Thus the concurrence of our Saviour's being born at Bethlehem, with a long foregoing series of prophecy and other coincidences, is doubtless miraculous; the series of prophecy, and other coincidences, and the event, being admitted: though the event itself, his birth at that place, appears to have been brought about in a natural way; of which, however, no one can be certain.

And as several of these events seem, in some degree 2
expressly, to have verified the prophetic history already; so likewise they may be considered further, as having a peculiar aspect towards the full completion of it; as affording some presumption that the whole of it shall, one time or other, be fulfilled. Thus, that the Jews have been so wonderfully preserved in their long and wide dispersion; which is indeed the direct fulfilling of some prophecies, but is now mentioned only as looking forward to somewhat yet to come; that natural religion came forth from Judæa, and spread in the degree it has done over the world, before lost in idolatry; which, together with some other things, have distinguished that very place, in like manner as the people of it are distinguished: that this great change of religion over the earth was brought about under the profession and acknowledgment, that Jesus was the promised Messiah: things of this kind naturally turn the thoughts of serious men towards the full completion of the prophetic history, concerning the final restoration of that people; concerning the establishment of the everlasting kingdom among them, the kingdom of the Messiah; and the future state of the world, under this sacred government. Such circumstances and events, compared with these prophecies, though no completions of them, yet would not, I think, be spoken of as nothing in the argument, by a person upon his first being informed of them. They fall in with the prophetic history of things still future,

give it some additional credibility, have the appearance of being somewhat in order to the full completion of it.

Indeed it requires a good degree of knowledge, and great calmness and consideration, to be able to judge thoroughly of the evidence for the truth of Christianity, from that part of the prophetic history which relates to the situation of the kingdoms of the world, and to the state of the church, from the establishment of Christianity to the present time. But it appears from a general view of it, to be very material. And those persons who have thoroughly examined it, and some of them were men of the coolest tempers, greatest capacities, and least liable to imputations of prejudice, insist upon it as determinately conclusive.

Suppose now a person quite ignorant of history, first to recollect the passages above mentioned out of Scripture, without knowing but that the whole was a late fiction, then to be informed of the correspondent facts now mentioned, and to unite them all into one view: that the profession and establishment of natural religion in the world is greatly owing, in different ways, to this book, and the supposed revelation which it contains; that it is acknowledged to be of the earliest antiquity; that its chronology and common history are entirely credible; that this ancient nation, the Jews, of whom it chiefly treats, appear to have been, in fact, the people of God, in a distinguished sense: that, as there was a national expectation amongst them, raised from the prophecies, of a Messiah to appear at such a time, so one at this time appeared claiming to be that Messiah; that he was rejected by this nation, but received by the Gentiles, not upon the evidence of prophecy, but of miracles; that the religion he taught supported itself under the greatest difficulties, gained ground, and at length became the religion of the world; that in the mean time the Jewish polity was utterly destroyed, and the nation dispersed over the face of the earth; that notwithstanding this, they have remained a distinct numerous people for so many centuries, even to this day; which not only appears to be the express completion of several prophecies concerning them, but also renders it, as one may speak, a visible and easy possibility that the promises made to them as a nation, may yet be

fulfilled. And to these acknowledged truths, let the person we have been supposing add, as I think he ought, whether every one will allow it or no, the obvious appearances which there are of the state of the world, in other respects besides what relates to the Jews, and of the Christian Church, having so long answered, and still answering to the prophetic history. Suppose, I say, these facts set over against the things before mentioned out of the Scripture, and seriously compared with them; the joint view of both together, must, I think, appear of very great weight to a considerate reasonable person: of much greater indeed, upon having them first laid before him, than is easy for us, who are so familiarized to them, to conceive, without some particular attention for that purpose.

All these things, and the several particulars contained F
under them, require to be distinctly and most thoroughly
examined into; that the weight of each may be judged of,
upon such examination, and such conclusion drawn as results 1
from their united force. But this has not been attempted
here. I have gone no further than to show, that the general
imperfect view of them now given, the confessed historical
evidence for miracles, and the many obvious appearing com-
pletions of prophecy, together with the collateral things[37]
here mentioned, and there are several others of the like sort;
that all this together, which, being fact, must be acknow-
ledged by unbelievers, amounts to real evidence of somewhat
more than human in this matter: evidence much more
important than careless men, who have been accustomed
only to transient and partial views of it, can imagine; and 2
indeed abundantly sufficient to act upon. And these things, I apprehend, must be acknowledged by unbelievers. For though they may say, that the historical evidence of miracles wrought in attestation of Christianity, is not sufficient to convince them that such miracles were really wrought; they cannot deny, that there is such historical evidence, it being a known matter of fact that there is. They may say, the conformity between the prophecies and events is by

[37] All the particular things mentioned in this chapter, not reducible to the head of certain miracles, or determinate completions of prophecy. See pp. 251, 252.

accident; but there are many instances in which such conformity itself cannot be denied. They may say, with regard to such kind of collateral things as those above mentioned, that any odd accidental events, without meaning, will have a meaning found in them by fanciful people; and that such as are fanciful in any one certain way, will make out a thousand coincidences, which seem to favour their peculiar follies. Men, I say, may talk thus: but no one who is serious, can possibly think these things to be nothing, if he considers the importance of collateral things, and even of lesser circumstances, in the evidence of probability, as distinguished, in Nature, from the evidence of demonstration. In many cases indeed it seems to require the truest judgment, to determine with exactness the weight of circumstantial evidence; but it is very often altogether as convincing as that which is the most express and direct.

This general view of the evidence for Christianity,[38] considered as making one argument, may also serve to recommend to serious persons, to set down every thing which they think may be of any real weight at all in proof of it, and particularly the many seeming completions of prophecy: and they will find that, judging by the natural rules, by which we judge of probable evidence in common matters, they amount to a much higher degree of proof, upon such a joint review, than could be supposed upon considering them separately, at different times; how strong soever the proof might before appear to them, upon such separate views of it. For probable proofs, by being added, not only increase

[38] [This summary of Christian evidence is clear, and in many respects striking and suggestive. It would be much more impressive, however, if more justice were done to the morality of Scripture, and the evident adaptedness of its spiritual truths to the necessities of men. It is not easy to define logically the force of this part of the Christian evidence, but all who have studied it attest its value. "The spirit of prophecy," says Baxter, "was the first witness; the spirit of miraculous power was the second; and now we have the spirit of renovation and holiness." There is still a sense in which the language of the Samaritans is true: "Now we believe . . . for we have heard him ourselves, and know that this is indeed the Christ, the Saviour of the world," John iv. 42.]

the evidence, but multiply it.[39] Nor should I dissuade any 3
one from setting down what he thought made for the con-
trary side. But then it is to be remembered, not in order to
influence his judgment, but his practice, that a mistake on
one side may be, in its consequences, much more dangerous
than a mistake on the other. And what course is most safe,
and what most dangerous, is a consideration thought very
material, when we deliberate, not concerning events, but 4
concerning conduct in our temporal affairs. To be influenced
by this consideration in our judgment, to believe or disbelieve
upon it, is indeed as much prejudice, as any thing whatever.
And, like other prejudices, it operates contrary ways in

39 ["Taken together," and, as he has already stated, "*multiplied* together;" that is, the improbability of several marks of truth existing *simultaneously* in the same thing, and that thing false, is much greater than the *sum* of the improbabilities of each existing in it *separately*. "It seems to my understanding," says Mr. Wilberforce, "at least morally impossible that so many different species of proofs, and all so strong, should have lent their concurrent aid, and have united their joint force, in the establishment of falsehood."—*Practical View*, chap. v. "If man's contrivance, or if the favour of accident, *could* have given to Christianity any of its apparent testimonies . . . there could be no room to believe, nor even to imagine, that all . . . could be united together by any such causes. If a successful craft could have contrived its public miracles, or so much as the pretence of them, it requires another reach of craft and new resources to provide and adapt its prophecies to the same object. Further, it demanded not only a different art, but a totally opposite character, to conceive and propagate its admirable morals. Again, the achievement of its propagation, in defiance of the powers and the terrors of the world, implied a new energy of personal genius and other qualities of action than any concurring in the work before. Lastly, the model of the life of its founder, in the very description of it, is a work of so much originality and wisdom, as could be the offspring only of consummate powers of invention. The genuine state of the Christian evidence is this: there is unambiguous testimony to its works of miraculous power; there are oracles of prophecy; there are other distinct marks and signs of a Divine original within it. And no state but that of truth could in one subject produce them all, or can now account for their existence."—Davison's *Discourses on Prophecy*, p. 31.]

different men; for some are inclined to believe what they hope, and others what they fear. And it is manifest unreasonableness to apply to men's passions in order to gain their assent. But in deliberations concerning conduct, there is nothing which reason more requires to be taken into the account, than the importance of it. For, suppose it doubtful, what would be the consequence of acting in this, or in a contrary manner: still, that taking one side could be attended with little or no bad consequence, and taking the other might be attended with the greatest, must appear, to unprejudiced reason, of the highest moment towards determining how we are to act. But the truth of our religion, like the truth of common matters, is to be judged of by all
5 the evidence taken together. And unless the whole series of things which may be alleged in this argument, and every particular thing in it, can reasonably be supposed to have been by accident (for here the stress of the argument for Christianity lies); then is the truth of it proved: in like manner, as if in any common case numerous events acknowledged, were to be alleged in proof of any other event disputed; the truth of the disputed event would be proved, not only if any one of the acknowledged ones did of itself clearly imply it, but, though no one of them singly did so, if the whole of the acknowledged events taken together could not in reason be supposed to have happened, unless the disputed one were true.

It is obvious, how much advantage the nature of this evidence gives to those persons who attack Christianity, especially in conversation. For it is easy to show, in a short and lively manner, that such and such things are liable to objection, that this and another thing is of little weight in itself; but impossible to show, in like manner, the united force of the whole argument in one view.

6 However, lastly, as it has been made appear, that there is no presumption against a revelation as miraculous; that the general scheme of Christianity, and the principal parts of it, are conformable to the experienced constitution of things, and the whole perfectly credible: so the account now given of the positive evidence for it shows, that this evidence is such as, from the nature of it, cannot be destroyed, though it should be lessened.

CHAPTER VIII.

OF THE OBJECTIONS WHICH MAY BE MADE AGAINST ARGUING FROM THE ANALOGY OF NATURE, TO RELIGION.

[Against reasonings founded on analogy some may raise objections; and a few of these it is intended here to consider.

A Enumerated **1—5**. It is alleged, for example,

1 It is a poor thing to meet difficulties in revealed religion by saying that there are the same difficulties in Nature, when we want to clear religion from all difficulties. Answer,

a The thing wanted is, it seems, to *comprehend* Providence and God.

b To reason from the known (natural religion) to the unknown (revealed) is not a poor thing, compared with no knowledge; so it is allowed in science and medicine.

c If natural religion is admitted to be true, it is important to show that objections to revealed religion apply equally to natural, for so revealed religion is vindicated.

2 But it is surely a strange way of convincing men of the obligations of religion to show that they have as little reason for their worldly pursuits.

Answer,

a Religion is a practical thing, as business is; and, like reasons, or any reasons, may be sufficient to guide us in both cases, and ought, from prudence, to guide us.

b If the objection be that religion should not have doubtful evidence; then note that worldly pursuits are often doubtful, yet men follow them. Besides, the case of religion, though not free from all doubt, is much stronger than the case of worldly conduct.

3 It is a strange way of vindicating God's character in religion for goodness and justice, to show that like objections lie against Providence, when we ought rather to answer the objections themselves.

Answer.

a The treatise does not profess to vindicate God's character, but to show men their obligations; and to do this, all that is needed is to show that, for aught we know, the objections are consistent with goodness and justice, and may be even proofs of them.

b It is attempted to answer objections to God's goodness and justice, not by showing that the like objections (*supposed*

conclusive), be against Providence, but by showing that the objections *are not conclusive*, applying equally to God's present government as a matter of fact.

c Even if these objections are not answered in this way, the facts of religion remain as credible, in spite of the objections.

d Though objections to the reasonableness of religion cannot be answered without considering its reasonableness, objections against its credibility may: for

1 It is a system of facts, and

2 Though sometimes useful to show how reasonable any part is, this cannot always be necessary, and

3 The obligations of religion depend upon the reasonableness, not of the system, but of the practice, and so it is enough if in the system there be nothing unreasonable; and

e Analogy may supply no answer to objections against the goodness of the system, but it does to objections against the credibility of the system as a matter of fact. This is what is meant in these remarks.

4 Religion rests on unsatisfactory evidence; that is, on evidence not sufficient for certainty; but

a So is the evidence of any system of life—what is best—what rules will secure it? Religion, therefore, is like every other real thing in this world, its evidence real, but not certain; uncertainty belonging to our very condition.

b Moreover, religion is simply intended to try and discipline our virtue. It is a probation, as it would not be, if its evidence were overbearing.

c So that the only question is, whether its evidence is sufficient in prudence to influence the judgment and practice, while thus testing our virtue.

5 In fact (it will be said) men are not influenced by this evidence, and that is a fatal objection.

Answer:

a The question is not what men do, but what they ought to do in practice.

b The objection is nothing against religion, which answers its end in testing men, whether they are influenced by it or not.

c It is allowed the evidence of religion has some weight, but so it ought to have some influence, and if such influence be allowed to this treatise, it has not missed its end.

B On the argument of the treatise Butler notes,

1 That he reasons, not upon his own principles, but upon (that is, notwithstanding) the principles of his opponents; admitting fatalism, and affirming nothing of the moral fitness of moral acts, independent of the will of the Creator.

2 He treats religion simply as a matter of fact; as a history which, moreover, reveals as facts God's moral government, present and future, etc., and which are proved, not demonstratively (a thing impossible in matter of fact), but practically. Abstract questions, and the principles of things involved in all those facts, are not discussed.

3 Hence the force of this treatise.

a To those who hold liberty and moral fitness it is an additional proof of the truth of religion, and to those who deny them it is a new proof.

b To believers it strengthens existing evidence, and answers objections; to unbelievers, it proves Christianity credible; and,

c More generally, analogy confirms all facts to which it can be applied, and is the only proof of most. It is on the side of religion, and ought to be followed especially by all who profess to follow Nature.]

F every one would consider, with such attention as they are ound, even in point of morality, to consider, what they udge and give characters of, the occasion of this chapter vould be, in some good measure at least, superseded. But ince this is not to be expected; for some we find do not oncern themselves to understand even what they write gainst: since this treatise, in common with most others, ies open to objections, which may appear very material to houghtful men at first sight; and, besides that, seems eculiarly liable to the objections of such as can judge withut thinking, and of such as can censure without judging; may not be amiss to set down the chief of these objections hich occur to me, and consider them to their hands. And ey are such as these:[1]

"That it is a poor thing to solve difficulties in revelation, y saying, that there are the same in natural religion; when hat is wanting is to clear both of them of these their ommon, as well as other their respective, difficulties; but

[1] [These objections are taken up in succession (though not repeated in the text) and answered.]

2 that it is a strange way indeed of convincing men of the obligations of religion, to show them, that they have as little reason for their worldly pursuits: and a strange way of vindicating the justice and goodness of the Author of Nature, and of removing the objections against both, to which the system of religion lies open, to show, that the like objections lie against natural providence; a way of answering objections against religion, without so much as pretending to make out, that the system of it, or the particular things in it objected against, are reasonable——especially, perhaps some may be inattentive enough to add, must this be thought strange, when it is confessed that
4 analogy is no answer to such objections; that when this sort of reasoning is carried to the utmost length it can be imagined capable of, it will yet leave the mind in a very unsatisfied state: and that it must be unaccountable ignorance of mankind, to imagine they will be prevailed with to forego
5 their present interests and pleasures, from regard to religion, upon doubtful evidence."

Now, as plausible as this way of talking may appear, that appearance will be found in a great measure owing to half-views, which show but part of an object, yet show that indistinctly, and to undeterminate language. By these means weak men are often deceived by others, and ludicrous men by themselves. And even those who are serious and considerate, cannot always readily disentangle, and at once clearly see through the perplexities, in which subjects themselves are involved; and which are heightened by the deficiencies and the abuse of words. To this latter sort of persons, the following reply to each part of this objection severally, may be of some assistance; as it may also tend a little to stop and silence others.

First, The thing wanted, *i. e.* what men require, is to have
1 all difficulties cleared. And this is, or, at least for any thing we know to the contrary, it may be, the same, as requiring
a to comprehend the Divine nature, and the whole plan of Providence from everlasting to everlasting. But it hath
b always been allowed to argue, from what is acknowledged, to what is disputed. And it is in no other sense a poor thing, to argue from natural religion to revealed, in the manner found fault with, than it is to argue in numberless

other ways of probable deduction and inference, in matters of conduct, which we are continually reduced to the necessity of doing. Indeed, the epithet *poor* may be applied, I fear, as properly to great part or the whole of human life, as it is to the things mentioned in the objection. Is it not a poor thing, for a physician to have so little knowledge in the cure of diseases, as even the most eminent have? to act upon conjecture and guess, where the life of man is concerned? Undoubtedly it is: but not in comparison of having no skill at all in that useful art, and being obliged to act wholly in the dark.

Further: since it is as unreasonable, as it is common, to urge objections against revelation, which are of equal weight against natural religion; and those who do this, if they are not confused themselves, deal unfairly with others, in making it seem, that they are arguing only against revelation, or particular doctrines of it, when in reality they are arguing against moral providence; it is a thing of consequence to show, that such objections are as much levelled against natural religion as against revealed. And objections, which are equally applicable to both, are properly speaking answered, by its being shown that they are so, provided the former be admitted to be true. And, without taking in the consideration how distinctly this is admitted, it is plainly very material to observe, that as the things objected against in natural religion are of the same kind with what is certain matter of experience in the course of Providence, and in the information which God affords us concerning our temporal interest under his government; so the objections against the system of Christianity, and the evidence of it, are of the very same kind with those which are made against the system and evidence of natural religion. However, the reader upon review may see, that most of the analogies insisted upon, even in the latter part of this treatise, do not necessarily require to have more taken for granted than is in the former; that there is an Author of Nature, or natural Governor of the world: and Christianity is vindicated, not from its analogy to natural religion, but chiefly from its analogy to the experienced constitution of Nature.

Secondly, Religion is a practical thing, and consists in such 2

a determinate course of life, as being what, there is reason to think, is commanded by the Author of Nature, and will, upon
a the whole, be our happiness under his government. Now if men can be convinced, that they have the like reason to believe this, as to believe, that taking care of their temporal affairs will be to their advantage; such conviction cannot but be an argument to them for the practice of religion. And if there be really any reason for believing one of these, and endeavouring to preserve life, and secure ourselves the necessaries and conveniences of it; then there is reason also for believing the other, and endeavouring to secure the interest it proposes to us. And if the interest, which religion proposes to us, be infinitely greater than our whole temporal interest; then there must be proportionably greater reason for endeavouring to secure one, than the other; since, by the supposition, the probability of our securing one is equal to the probability of our securing the other. This seems plainly unanswerable; and has a tendency to influence fair minds, who consider what our condition really is, or upon what evidence we are naturally appointed to act; and who are disposed to acquiesce in the terms upon which we live, and attend to and follow that practical instruction, whatever it be, which is afforded us.

b But the chief and proper force of the argument referred to in the objection, lies in another place. For, it is said that the proof of religion is involved in such inextricable difficulties, as to render it doubtful; and that it cannot be supposed, that, if it were true, it would be left upon doubtful evidence. Here then, over and above the force of each particular difficulty or objection, these difficulties and objections taken together are turned into a positive argument against the truth of religion; which argument would stand thus. If religion were true, it would not be left doubtful, and open to objections to the degree in which it is: therefore that it is thus left, not only renders the evidence of it weak, and lessens its force, in proportion to the weight of such objections; but also shows it to be false, or is a general presumption of its being so. Now the observation, that, from the natural constitution and course of things, we must in our temporal concerns, almost continually, and in matters of great consequence, act upon evidence of a like kind and

degree to the evidence of religion, is an answer to this argument; because it shows, that it is according to the conduct and character of the Author of Nature to appoint we should act upon evidence like to that, which this argument presumes he cannot be supposed to appoint we should act upon: it is an instance, a general one made up of numerous particular ones, of somewhat in his dealing with us, similar to what is said to be incredible. And as the force of this answer lies merely in the parallel which there is between the evidence for religion and for our temporal conduct; the answer is equally just and conclusive, whether the parallel be made out, by showing the evidence of the former to be higher, or the evidence of the latter to be lower.

Thirdly, The design of this treatise is not to vindicate the 3
character of God, but to show the obligations of men; it is not to justify his providence, but to show what belongs to us to do. These are two subjects, and ought not to be confounded. And though they may at length run up into each other, yet observations may immediately tend to make out the latter, which do not appear, by any immediate connexion, to the purpose of the former; which is less our concern than many seem to think. For, first, it is not necessary we should a
justify the dispensations of Providence against objections, any further than to show, that the things objected against may, for aught we know, be consistent with justice and goodness. Suppose then, that there are things in the system of this world, and plan of Providence relating to it, which taken alone would be unjust: yet it has been shown unanswerably, that if we could take in the reference, which these things may have, to other things present, past, and to come; to the whole scheme, which the things objected against are parts of; these very things might, for aught we know, be found to be, not only consistent with justice, but instances of it. Indeed it has been shown, by the analogy of what we see, not only possible that this may be the case, but credible that it is. And thus objections, drawn from such things, are answered, and Providence is vindicated, as far as religion makes its vindication necessary. Hence it appears, secondly, b
that objections against the Divine justice and goodness are not endeavoured to be removed, by showing that the like objections, allowed to be really conclusive, lie against natural

providence: but those objections being supposed and shown not to be conclusive, the things objected against, considered as matters of fact, are further shown to be credible, from their conformity to the constitution of Nature; for instance, that God will reward and punish men for their actions hereafter, from the observation, that he does reward and punish them for their actions here. And this, I apprehend, is of weight. And I add, thirdly, it would be of weight, even
c though those objections were not answered. For, there being the proof of religion above set down; and religion implying several facts; for instance again, the fact last mentioned, that God will reward and punish men for their actions hereafter; the observation, that his present method of government is by rewards and punishments, shows that future fact not to be incredible: whatever objections men may think they have against it, as unjust or unmerciful, according to their notions of justice and mercy; or as improbable from their belief of necessity. I say, *as improbable*; for it is evident no objection against it, *as unjust*, can be urged from necessity; since this notion as much destroys
d injustice, as it does justice. Then, fourthly, Though objections against the reasonableness of the system of religion cannot indeed be answered without entering into consideration of its reasonableness; yet objections against the credibility or truth of it may. Because the system of it is
1 reducible into what is properly matter of fact: and the truth, the probable truth, of facts, may be shown without consideration of their reasonableness. Nor is it necessary, though, in some cases and respects it is highly useful and proper, yet it is not necessary, to give a proof of the reasonableness of every precept enjoined us, and of every particular
2 dispensation of Providence, which comes into the system of religion. Indeed the more thoroughly a person of a right disposition is convinced of the perfection of the Divine nature and conduct, the further he will advance towards that perfection of religion, which St. John speaks of.[2] But the general obligations of religion are fully made out, by
3 proving the reasonableness of the practice of it. And that the practice of religion *is* reasonable, may be shown, though no more could be proved, than that the system of it *may be*

[2] 1 John iv. 18.

for aught we knew to the contrary: and even without ering into the distinct consideration of this. And from ice, fifthly, it is easy to see, that though the analogy of ture is not an immediate answer to objections against the sdom, the justice, or goodness, of any doctrine or precept religion; yet it may be, as it is, an immediate and direct swer to what is really intended by such objections; which to show that the things objected against are incredible.

Fourthly, It is most readily acknowledged, that the fore- 4
ing treatise is by no means satisfactory; very far indeed om it: but so would any natural institution of life appear, reduced into a system, together with its evidence. Leaving a
ligion out of the case, men are divided in their opinions, hether our pleasures overbalance our pains: and whether be, or be not, eligible to live in this world[3]. And were ll such controversies settled, which perhaps, in speculation, ould be found involved in great difficulties; and were it etermined upon the evidence of reason, as Nature has de- ermined it to our hands, that life is to be preserved: yet till, the rules which God has been pleased to afford us, for escaping the miseries of it, and obtaining its satisfactions, the rules for instance, of preserving health, and recovering it when lost, are not only fallible and precarious, but very far from being exact. Nor are we informed by Nature, in future contingencies and accidents, so as to render it at all certain, what is the best method of managing our affairs. What will be the success of our temporal pursuits, in the common sense of the word success, is highly doubtful. And what will be the success of them in the proper sense of the word; *i. e.* what happiness or enjoyment we shall obtain by them, is doubtful in a much higher degree. Indeed the unsatisfactory nature of the evidence, with which we are obliged to take up, in the daily course of life, is scarce to be expressed. Yet men do not throw away life, or disregard the interests of it, upon account of this doubtfulness. The evidence of religion then being admitted real, those who object against it, as not satisfactory, *i. e.* as not being what they wish it, plainly forget the very condition of our being:

[3] [This question is discussed in Bayle's Dict. art. Xenophanes, notes, D, E, F, G. It is instructive to find unbelievers confessing in this way to the vanity of life apart from immortality.]

for satisfaction, in this sense, does not belong to such a
b creature as man. And, which is more material, they forget also the very nature of religion. For, religion presupposes, in all those who will embrace it, a certain degree of integrity and honesty; which it was intended to try whether men have or not, and to exercise in such as have it, in order to its improvement. Religion presupposes this as much, and in the same sense, as speaking to a man presupposes he understands the language in which you speak; or as warning a man of any danger presupposes that he hath such a regard to himself, as that he will endeavour to avoid it. And
c therefore the question is not at all, Whether the evidence of religion be satisfactory; but Whether it be, in reason, sufficient to prove and discipline that virtue, which it presupposes. Now the evidence of it is fully sufficient for all those purposes of probation; how far soever it is from being satisfactory, as to the purposes of curiosity, or any other: and indeed it answers the purposes of the former in several respects, which it would not do, if it were as overbearing as is required. One might add further; that whether the motives or the evidence for any course of action be satisfactory, meaning here by that word, what satisfies a man, that such a course of action will in event be for his good; this need never be, and I think, strictly speaking, never is, the practical question in common matters. But the practical question in all cases is, Whether the evidence for a course of action be such, as, taking in all circumstances, makes the faculty within us, which is the guide and judge of conduct,[4] determine that course of action to be prudent. Indeed, satisfaction that it will be for our interest or happiness, abundantly determines an action to be prudent: but evidence almost infinitely lower than this, determines actions to be so too; even in the conduct of every day.

5 Fifthly, As to the objection concerning the influence which this argument, or any part of it, may, or may not, be expected to have upon men; I observe, as above, that religion being intended for a trial and exercise of the morality of every person's character, who is a subject of it; and there being,

[4] See Dissert. II. [Clarke uses this argument: 'Evidences, prop. xv. He also cites Arnobius (adv. Gent. lib. 2) to the same effect.]

as I have shown, such evidence for it, as is sufficient, in reason, to influence men to embrace it; to object, that it is not to be imagined mankind will be influenced by such evidence, is nothing to the purpose of the foregoing treatise. For the purpose of it is not to inquire, what sort of creatures mankind are; but what the light and knowledge, which is a
afforded them, requires they should be: to show how, in reason, they ought to behave; not how, in fact, they will behave. This depends upon themselves, and is their own concern; the personal concern of each man in particular. And how little regard the generality have to it, experience indeed does too fully show. But religion, considered as a probation, has had its end upon all persons, to whom it has b
been proposed with evidence sufficient in reason to influence their practice: for by this means they have been put into a state of probation; let them behave as they will in it.[5] And thus, not only revelation, but reason also, teaches us, that by the evidence of religion being laid before men, the designs of Providence are carrying on, not only with regard to those who will, but likewise with regard to those who will not, be influenced by it. However, lastly, the objection here referred to, allows the things insisted upon in this treatise to be of c
some weight: and if so, it may be hoped it will have some influence. And if there be a probability that it will have any at all, there is the same reason in kind, though not in degree, to lay it before men, as there would be, if it were likely to have a greater influence.

And further, I desire it may be considered, with respect to E
the whole of the foregoing objections, that in this treatise I have argued upon the principles of others,[6] not my own:

[5] ["If a religious belief is to be with me the same thing as are my moral beliefs; if it is to act as an influence, countervailing other influences; then it must be possible for me to disbelieve. There could not be a Christian in a world constituted as this is, if there were not always room for a man to be an infidel."—*Restoration of Belief*, p. 338.]

[6] By *arguing upon the principles of others*, the reader will observe is meant, not proving any thing *from* those principles, but *notwithstanding* them. Thus religion is proved, not *from* the opinion of necessity, which is absurd; but, *notwithstanding* or *even though* that opinion were admitted to be true.

and have omitted what I think true, and of the utmost importance, because by others thought unintelligible, or not true. Thus I have argued upon the principles of the
1 Fatalists, which I do not believe: and have omitted a thing of the utmost importance which I do believe, the moral fitness and unfitness of actions, prior to all will whatever; which I apprehend as certainly to determine the Divine conduct, as speculative truth and falsehood necessarily determine the Divine judgment. Indeed the principle of liberty, and that of moral fitness, so force themselves upon the mind, that moralists, the ancients as well as moderns, have formed their language upon it. And probably it may appear in mine: though I have endeavoured to avoid it; and, in order to avoid it, have sometimes been obliged to express myself in a manner, which will appear strange to such as do not observe the reason for it: but the general argument here pursued does not at all suppose or proceed upon these principles. Now, these two abstract principles of liberty and
2 moral fitness being omitted, religion can be considered in no other view, than merely as a question of fact: and in this view it is here considered. It is obvious, that Christianity, and the proof of it, are both historical. And even natural religion is properly a matter of fact. For, that there is a righteous Governor of the world, is so: and this proposition contains the general system of natural religion. But then, several abstract truths, and in particular these two principles, are usually taken into consideration in the proof of it: whereas it is here treated of only as a matter of fact. To explain this: that the three angles of a triangle are equal to two right ones, is an abstract truth: but that they appear so to our mind, is only a matter of fact. And this last must have been admitted, if any thing was, by those ancient sceptics, who would not have admitted the former: but pretended to doubt, whether there were any such thing as truth, or whether we could certainly depend upon our faculties of understanding for the knowledge of it in any case. So likewise, that there is, in the nature of things, an original standard of right and wrong in actions, independent upon all will, but which unalterably determines the will of God, to exercise that moral government over the world, which religion teaches, *i. e.* finally and upon the whole to reward

and punish men respectively as they act right or wrong; this assertion contains an abstract truth, as well as matter of fact. But suppose, in the present state, every man, without exception, was rewarded and punished in exact proportion as he followed or transgressed that sense of right and wrong, which God has implanted in the nature of every man: this would not be at all an abstract truth, but only a matter of fact. And though this fact were acknowledged by every one; yet the very same difficulties might be raised as are now, concerning the abstract questions of liberty and moral fitness: and we should have a proof, even the certain one of experience, that the government of the world was perfectly moral, without taking in the consideration of those questions: and this proof would remain, in what way soever they were determined. And thus, God having given mankind a moral faculty, the object of which is actions, and which naturally approves some actions as right, and of good desert, and condemns others as wrong, and of ill desert; that he will, finally and upon the whole, reward the former and punish the latter, is not an assertion of an abstract truth, but of what is as mere a fact, as his doing so at present would be. This future fact I have not indeed proved with the force with which it might be proved, from the principles of liberty and moral fitness; but without them have given a really conclusive practical proof of it, which is greatly strengthened by the general analogy of Nature: a proof easily cavilled at, easily shown not to be demonstrative, for it is not offered as such; but impossible, I think, to be evaded, or answered. And thus the obligations of religion are made out, exclusively of the questions concerning liberty and moral fitness; which have been perplexed with difficulties and abstruse reasonings, as everything may.

Hence therefore may be observed distinctly, what is the 3
force of this treatise. It will be, to such as are convinced of religion upon the proof arising out of the two last-mentioned principles, an additional proof and a confirmation of it: to such as do not admit those principles, an original proof of it,[7] and a confirmation of that proof. Those who believe will here find the scheme of Christianity cleared of

[7] P. 123, etc.

objections, and the evidence of it in a peculiar manner strengthened: those who do not believe will at least be shown the absurdity of all attempts to prove Christianity false, the plain undoubted credibility of it, and, I hope, a good deal more.

And thus, though some perhaps may seriously think that analogy, as here urged, has too great stress laid upon it; and ridicule, unanswerable ridicule, may be applied, to show the argument from it in a disadvantageous light: yet there can be no question, but that it is a real one. For religion, both natural and revealed, implying in it numerous facts; analogy, being a confirmation of all facts to which it can be applied, as it is the only proof of most, cannot but be admitted by every one to be a material thing, and truly of weight on the side of religion, both natural and revealed: and it ought to be particularly regarded by such as profess to follow Nature, and to be less satisfied with abstract reasonings.

CONCLUSION.

Whatever account may be given of the strange inattention and disregard, in some ages and countries, to a matter of such importance as religion; it would, before experience, be incredible, that there should be the like disregard in those, who have had the moral system of the world laid before them, as it is by Christianity, and often inculcated upon them: because this moral system carries in it a good degree of evidence for its truth, upon its being barely proposed to our thoughts. There is no need of abstruse reasonings and distinctions, to convince an unprejudiced understanding, that there is a God who made and governs the world, and will judge it in righteousness; though they may be necessary to answer abstruse difficulties, when once such are raised; when the very meaning of those words, which express most intelligibly the general doctrine of religion, is pretended to be uncertain; and the clear truth of the thing itself is obscured by the intricacies of speculation. But to an unprejudiced mind ten thousand thousand instances of design cannot but prove a designer. And it is intuitively manifest, that crea-

tures ought to live under a dutiful sense of their Maker; and that justice and charity must be his laws, to creatures whom he has made social, and placed in society. Indeed the truth of revealed religion, peculiarly so called, is not self-evident, but requires external proof, in order to its being received. Yet inattention, among us, to revealed religion, will be found to imply the same dissolute, immoral temper of mind, as inattention to natural religion: because, when both are laid before us, in the manner they are in Christian countries of liberty, our obligations to inquire into both, and to embrace both upon supposition of their truth, are obligations of the same nature. For, revelation claims to be the voice of God: and our obligation to attend to his voice is surely moral in all cases. And as it is insisted, that its evidence is conclusive, upon thorough consideration of it; so it offers itself to us with manifest obvious appearances of having something more than human in it, and therefore in all reason requires to have its claims most seriously examined into. It is to be added, that though light and knowledge, in what manner soever afforded us, is equally from God; yet a miraculous revelation has a peculiar tendency, from the first principles of our nature, to awaken mankind, and inspire them with reverence and awe: and this is a peculiar obligation, to attend to what claims to be so with such appearances of truth. It is therefore most certain, that our obligations to inquire seriously into the evidence of Christianity, and, upon supposition of its truth, to embrace it, are of the utmost importance, and moral in the highest and most proper sense. Let us then suppose, that the evidence of religion in general, and of Christianity, has been seriously inquired into, by all reasonable men among us. Yet we find many professedly to reject both, upon speculative principles of infidelity. And all of them do not content themselves with a bare neglect of religion, and enjoying their imaginary freedom from its restraints. Some go much beyond this. They deride God's moral government over the world. They renounce his protection, and defy his justice. They ridicule and vilify Christianity, and blaspheme the Author of it; and take all occasions to manifest a scorn and contempt of revelation. This amounts to an active setting themselves against religion; to what

may be considered as a positive principle of irreligion, which they cultivate within themselves, and, whether they intend this effect or not, render habitual, as a good man does the contrary principle. And others, who are not chargeable with all this profligateness, yet are in avowed opposition to religion, as if discovered to be groundless. Now admitting, which is the supposition we go upon, that these persons act upon what they think principles of reason, and otherwise they are not to be argued with; it is really inconceivable, that they should imagine they clearly see the whole evidence of it, considered in itself, to be nothing at all: nor do they pretend this. They are far indeed from having a just notion of its evidence: but they would not say its evidence was nothing, if they thought the system of it, with all its circumstances, were credible, like other matters of science or history. So that their manner of treating it must proceed, either from such kind of objections against all religion, as have been answered or obviated in the former part of this treatise; or else from objections, and difficulties, supposed more peculiar to Christianity. Thus, they entertain prejudices against the whole notion of a revelation, and miraculous interpositions. They find things in Scripture, whether in incidental passages, or in the general scheme of it, which appear to them unreasonable. They take for granted, that if Christianity were true, the light of it must have been more general, and the evidence of it more satisfactory, or rather overbearing: that it must and would have been, in some way, otherwise put and left than it is. Now this is not imagining they see the evidence itself to be nothing, or inconsiderable; but quite another thing. It is being fortified against the evidence, in some degree acknowledged, by thinking they see the system of Christianity, or somewhat which appears to them necessarily connected with it, to be incredible or false; fortified against that evidence, which might, otherwise, make great impression upon them. Or, lastly, if any of these persons are, upon the whole, in doubt concerning the truth of Christianity; their behaviour seems owing to their taking for granted, through strange inattention, that such doubting is, in a manner, the same thing, as being certain against it.

To these persons and to this state of opinion concerning

religion, the foregoing treatise is adapted. For, all the general objections against the moral system of Nature having been obviated, it is shown, that there is not any peculiar presumption at all against Christianity, either considered as not discoverable by reason, or as unlike to what is so discovered; nor any worth mentioning against it as miraculous, if any at all; none, certainly, which can render it in the least incredible. It is shown, that, upon supposition of a Divine revelation, the analogy of Nature renders it beforehand highly credible, I think probable, that many things in it must appear liable to great objections; and that we must be incompetent judges of it, to a great degree. This observation is, I think, unquestionably true, and of the very utmost importance: but it is urged, as I hope it will be understood, with great caution of not vilifying the faculty of reason, which is *the candle of the Lord within us*;[1] though it can afford no light where it does not shine, nor judge where it has no principles to judge upon. The objections here spoken of, being first answered in the view of objections against Christianity as a matter of fact, are in the next place considered as urged more immediately against the wisdom, justice, and goodness of the Christian dispensation. And it is fully made out, that they admit of exactly the like answer, in every respect, to what the like objections against the constitution of Nature admit of: that, as partial views give the appearance of wrong to things, which, upon further consideration and knowledge of their relations to other things, are found just and good; so it is perfectly credible, that the things objected against the wisdom and goodness of the Christian dispensation, may be rendered instances of wisdom and goodness, by their reference to other things beyond our view: because Christianity is a scheme as much above our comprehension, as that of Nature; and, like that, a scheme in which means are made use of to accomplish ends, and which, as is most credible, may be carried on by general laws. And it ought to be attended to, that this is not an answer taken merely or chiefly from our ignorance, but from somewhat positive, which our observation shows us. For to like objections, the like answer is experienced to be just, in number-

[1] Prov. xx. 27.

less parallel cases. The objections against the Christian dispensation, and the method by which it is carried on, having been thus obviated, in general and together; the chief of them are considered distinctly, and the particular things objected to are shown credible, by their perfect analogy, each apart, to the constitution of Nature. Thus, if man be fallen from his primitive state, and to be restored, and infinite wisdom and power engages in accomplishing our recovery: it were to have been expected, it is said, that this should have been effected at once; and not by such a long series of means, and such a various economy of persons and things; one dispensation preparatory to another, this to a further one, and so on through an indefinite number of ages, before the end of the scheme proposed can be completely accomplished; a scheme conducted by infinite wisdom, and executed by almighty power. But now, on the contrary, our finding that everything in the constitution and course of Nature is thus carried on, shows such expectations concerning revelation to be highly unreasonable; and is a satisfactory answer to them, when urged as objections against the credibility, that the great scheme of Providence in the redemption of the world may be of this kind, and to be accomplished in this manner. As to the particular method of our redemption, the appointment of a Mediator between God and man: this has been shown to be most obviously analogous to the general conduct of Nature, *i. e.* the God of Nature, in appointing others to be the instruments of his mercy, as we experienced in the daily course of providence. The condition of this world, which the doctrine of our redemption by Christ presupposes, so much falls in with natural appearances, that heathen moralists inferred it from those appearances: inferred, that human nature was fallen from its original rectitude, and, in consequence of this, degraded from its primitive happiness. Or, however this opinion came into the world, these appearances must have kept up the tradition, and confirmed the belief of it. And as it was the general opinion under the light of Nature, that repentance and reformation, alone and by itself, was not sufficient to do away sin, and procure a full remission of the penalties annexed to it; and as the reason of the thing does not at all lead to any such conclusion; so every day's experience

shows us, that reformation is not, in any sort, sufficient to prevent the present disadvantages and miseries, which, in the natural course of things, God has annexed to folly and extravagance. Yet there may be ground to think, that the punishments, which, by the general laws of Divine government, are annexed to vice, may be prevented: that provision may have been, even originally, made, that they should be prevented by some means or other, though they could not by reformation alone. For we have daily instances of *such mercy*, in the general conduct of Nature: compassion, provided for misery,[2] medicines for diseases, friends against enemies. There is provision made, in the original constitution of the world, that much of the natural bad consequences of our follies, which persons themselves alone cannot prevent, may be prevented by the assistance of others; assistance, which Nature enables, and disposes and appoints them to afford. By a method of goodness analogous to this, when the world lay in wickedness, and consequently ruin, *God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son* to save it: and *he being made perfect by suffering, became the author of eternal salvation to all them that obey him.*[3] Indeed neither reason nor analogy would lead us to think, in particular, that the interposition of Christ, in the manner in which he did interpose, would be of that efficacy for recovery of the world, which the Scripture teaches us it was: but neither would reason nor analogy lead us to think, that other particular means would be of the efficacy, which experience shows they are, in numberless instances. And therefore, as the case before us does not admit of experience; so, that neither reason nor analogy can show how, or in what particular way, the interposition of Christ, as revealed in Scripture, is of that efficacy, which it is there represented to be; this is no kind nor degree of presumption against its being really of that efficacy. Further: the objections against Christianity, from the light of it not being universal, nor its evidence so strong as might possibly be given us, have been answered by the general analogy of Nature. That God has made such variety of creatures, is indeed an answer to the former: but that he dispenses his

[2] Serm. at the Rolls, p. 106. [3] John iii. 16; Heb. v. 9.

gifts in such variety, both of degrees and kinds, amongst creatures of the same species, and even to the same individuals at different times, is a more obvious and full answer to it. And it is so far from being the method of Providence in other cases, to afford us such overbearing evidence, as some require in proof of Christianity; that, on the contrary, the evidence upon which we are naturally appointed to act in common matters, throughout a very great part of life, is doubtful in a high degree. And admitting the fact, that God has afforded to some no more than doubtful evidence of religion; the same account may be given of it, as of difficulties and temptations with regard to practice. But as it is not impossible,[4] surely, that this alleged doubtfulness may be men's own fault; it deserves their most serious consideration, whether it be not so. However, it is certain, that doubting implies a degree of evidence for that of which we doubt; and that this degree of evidence as really lays us under obligations, as demonstrative evidence.

The whole, then, of religion is throughout credible: nor is there, I think, any thing relating to the revealed dispensation of things, more different from the experienced constitution and course of Nature, than some parts of the constitution of Nature are from other parts of it. And if so, the only question which remains is, what positive evidence can be alleged for the truth of Christianity. This too in general has been considered, and the objections against it estimated. Deduct, therefore, what is to be deducted from that evidence, upon account of any weight which may be thought to remain in these objections, after what the analogy of Nature has suggested in answer to them: and then consider, what are the practical consequences from all this, upon the most sceptical principles one can argue upon: (for I am writing to persons who entertain these principles:) and upon such consideration it will be obvious, that immorality, as little excuse as it admits of in itself, is greatly aggravated, in persons who have been made acquainted with Christianity, whether they believe it or not: because the moral system of nature, or natural religion, which Christianity lays before us, approves itself, almost intuitively, to a reasonable mind,

[4] Page 242, etc.

eing it proposed. In the next place, with regard to
nity, it will be observed; that there is a middle
a full satisfaction of the truth of it, and a satis-
of the contrary. The middle state of mind between
vo consists in a serious apprehension, that it may be
ined with doubt whether it be so. And this, upon
st judgment I am able to make, is as far towards
tive infidelity, as any sceptic can at all be supposed
who has had true Christianity, with the proper evi-
of it, laid before him, and has in any tolerable measure
ered them. For I would not be mistaken to com-
d all who have ever heard of it: because it seems
t, that in many countries called Christian, neither
ianity, nor its evidence, are fairly laid before men.
n places where both are, there appear to be some,
have very little attended to either, and who reject
tianity with a scorn proportionate to their inattention;
yet are by no means without understanding in other
ers. Now it has been shown that a serious apprehen-
that Christianity may be true, lays persons under the
test obligations of a serious regard to it, throughout the
le of their life: a regard not the same exactly, but in
y respects nearly the same, with what a full conviction
s truth would lay them under. Lastly, it will appear,
blasphemy and profaneness, I mean with regard to
istianity, are absolutely without excuse. For there is no
ptation to it, but from the wantonness of vanity or
th: and these, considering the infinite importance of the
ject, are no such temptations as to afford any excuse for
If this be a just account of things, and yet men can go
to vilify or disregard Christianity, which is to talk and
t as if they had a demonstration of its falsehood; there is
reason to think they would alter their behaviour to any
rpose, though there were a demonstration of its truth.

THE END OF THE SECOND PART.

TWO
BRIEF DISSERTATIONS.

I. OF PERSONAL IDENTITY.

II. OF THE NATURE OF VIRTUE.

ADVERTISEMENT.

In the first copy of these papers, I had inserted the two following Dissertations into the chapters, *Of a Future Life*, and, *Of the Moral Government of God*; with which they are closely connected. But as they do not directly fall under the *title* of the foregoing Treatise, and would have kept the subject of it too long out of sight, it seemed more proper to place them by themselves.

DISSERTATION I.

OF PERSONAL IDENTITY.

THE question to which this dissertation is devoted is metaphysically of considerable interest. Does each man continue, through his whole existence, the same thinking being; and if so, wherein does the sameness consist, and what is evidence of it? The question is now not often discussed; but in the writings of the last century it was one of the most popular subjects of inquiry.[1]

As the question is generally expressed, it is, unhappily, ambiguous.[2] *Person* or *substance*, for example, may mean, or be taken to include, the material elements of which the body is composed; and as it is known that the human frame is gradually changed every few years, the question whether a man is in this sense, and for seven years together, the same person or substance, must be answered in the negative. It must be noticed also that *sameness* (like identity) is used in two senses. It is *properly* applicable to a single object which we affirm to be not another. In a *secondary* sense it is applied to objects which are very much alike; as when we say that one house is built of the same materials as another, meaning that the materials are of similar quality. In the first sense, sameness does not involve the idea of similarity—"The same person, but how altered!" In the second sense similarity is essential. The secondary sense admits of degrees ("nearly the same"); the proper sense does not.[3]

It is in forgetfulness of this last distinction that some have stated the question to be, whether the thinking being (person or substance) continues to possess like qualities through its whole existence. In fact, men's minds, affections, judgments, all change. A man may even be renewed and still be, in the proper sense, the same man. The question is really, freed from all ambiguities, Does each man continue, through his whole being, the *same* person, or does he become *another*; a question that carries with it its answer.

What constitutes this sameness, and what is its evidence, are questions less easily answered. Clearly, the sameness does not de-

[1] See Martinus Scriblerus, ch. vii.
[2] Shaftesbury's Characteristics, iii. 172, ed. 1745.
[3] Whately's Logic, bk. iv. v. § 1.

pend on the identity of the particles of our bodies, nor even upon the possession of any body. Through life, we have the *same* body; that is, in the secondary sense of same, our bodies are 'natural;' the resurrection (or spiritual) body is not yet given to us: in the proper sense of *same* our bodies are not the same, they are ever changing. Nor does this sameness consist in or depend on our consciousness, as Locke seems to have held. In states of disease or in intemperance a man may lose all consciousness of identity and yet not cease to be the same person. It is true our conviction of personal identity and the idea of it may be obtained through consciousness and memory, as in fact they are, but our identity itself is prior to this consciousness, as (to use Butler's comparison) truth is prior to knowledge. I am now conscious of existence; I am conscious, moreover, of the memory of prior states of existence: I conclude, therefore, instinctively and intuitively, as Butler seems to teach, that the being (or person) in whom this double consciousness inheres is the same being and not another. The evidence is intuitive, and the identity is of the conscious substance or thinking being—not of consciousness, still less of material substance.[4]

The importance of this speculation, as a practical question, in connexion with a future life is obvious. If in that life each moral agent is no longer the same, but another, moral government, in the largest sense, is at an end. That government implies the dependence of the condition of our future selves upon our present behaviour.

It is also worth noting, that the consciousness of mental identity is a presumption, as Dr. T. Brown has intimated, that the mind is not material. It seems free at least from the common quality of all that is material—liability to change and decay.]

["The sameness of person" implied in our living in a future life has created strange difficulties, and stranger solutions of them; ending in the denial that we shall ever enter it. Hence it may be worth considering.

What "personal identity" is, is a question not easily defined. It is clear, however,

1 In relation to consciousness,

That the comparison of two or more acts of consciousness of one's self gives the *idea* of this identity and proves it.

Yet such consciousness does not *make* the identity, nor is it necessary to it.

[4] See Reid's Works, Hamilton's edition, pp. 344 and 350.

of one's self, or one's own existence, in any two moments, there as immediately arises to the mind the idea of personal identity. And as the two former comparisons not only give us the ideas of similitude and equality, but also show us that two triangles are alike, and twice two and four are equal; so the latter comparison not only gives us the idea of personal identity, but also shows us the identity of ourselves in those two moments; the present, suppose, and that immediately past; or the present and that a month, a year, or twenty years past. Or, in other words, by reflecting upon that which is myself now, and that which was myself twenty years ago, I discern they are not two but one and the same self.

But though consciousness of what is past does thus ascertain our personal identity to ourselves, yet to say that it makes personal identity, or is necessary to our being the same persons, is to say that a person has not existed a single moment, nor done one action but what he can remember; indeed none but what he reflects upon. And one should really think it self-evident, that consciousness of personal identity presupposes, and therefore cannot constitute, personal identity; any more than knowledge, in any other case, can constitute truth which it presupposes.

This wonderful mistake may possibly have arisen from hence; that to be endued with consciousness is inseparable from the idea of a person or intelligent being. For this might be expressed inaccurately thus, that consciousness makes personality; and from hence it might be concluded to make personal identity: but though present consciousness of what we at present do and feel is necessary to our being the persons we now are, yet present consciousness of past actions or feelings is not necessary to our being the same persons who performed those actions, or had those feelings.

[1] [Consciousness refers properly to *present* states of mind. We are not said to be conscious of the past. Strictly speaking, we are conscious of present existence and conscious of the *remembrance* of the past. Butler no doubt thought of this distinction, as towards the end of the treatise he speaks of this second consciousness as a perception of the memory.]

The inquiry, what makes vegetables the same in the common acceptation of the word, does not appear to have any relation to this of personal identity; because the word *same*, 2
when applied to them and to person, is not only applied to different subjects, but it is also used in different senses. For when a man swears to the same tree as having stood fifty years in the same place, he means only the same as to all the purposes of property and uses of common life, and not that the tree has been all that time the same in the strict philosophical sense of the word. For he does not know whether any one particle of the present tree be the same with any one particle of the tree which stood in the same place fifty years ago. And if they have not one common particle of matter, they cannot be the same tree in the proper philosophic sense of the word *same*; it being evidently a contradiction in terms to say they are, when no part of their substance, and no one of their properties is the same: no part of their substance by the supposition; no one of their properties, because it is allowed that the same property cannot be transferred from one substance to another. And therefore when we say the identity or sameness of a plant consists in a continuation of the same life, communicated under the same organization, to a number of particles of matter, whether the same or not; the word *same*, when applied to life and to organization, cannot possibly be understood to signify what it signifies in this very sentence, when applied to matter. In a loose and popular sense then the life and the organization and the plant are justly said to be the same, notwithstanding the perpetual change of the parts. But in a strict and philosophical manner of speech, no man, no being, no mode of being, no anything, can be the same with that with which it hath indeed nothing the same. Now sameness is used in this latter sense when applied to persons. The identity of these, therefore, cannot subsist with diversity of substance.

The thing here considered and demonstratively, as I think, Conc.
determined, is proposed by Mr. Locke in these words, *Whether it*, i. e., the same self or person, *be the same identical substance?* And he has suggested what is a much better answer to the question, than that which he gives it in form. For he defines Person *a thinking intelligent being*, etc., and personal

identity *the sameness of a rational being.*[2] The question then is, whether the same rational being is the same substance; which needs no answer, because being and substance, in this place, stand for the same idea. The ground of the doubt, whether the same person be the same substance, is said to be this; that the consciousness of our own existence, in youth and in old age, or in any two joint successive moments, is not the *same individual action,*[3] i. e., not the same consciousness, but different successive consciousnesses. Now it is strange that this should have occasioned such perplexities. For it is surely conceivable, that a person may have a capacity of knowing some object or other to be the same now, which it was when he contemplated it formerly; yet in this case where, by the supposition, the object is perceived to be the same, the perception of it in any two moments cannot be one and the same perception. And thus though the successive consciousnesses which we have of our own existence are not the same, yet they are consciousnesses of one and the same thing or object; of the same person, self, or living agent. The person, of whose existence the consciousness is felt now, and was felt an hour or a year ago, is discerned to be not two persons, but one and the same person; and therefore is one and the same.

Mr. Locke's observations upon this subject appear hasty; and he seems to profess himself dissatisfied with suppositions which he has made relating to it.[4] But some of those hasty

[2] Locke's Works, vol. i. p. 146. [Locke's error in relation to personal identity was not unnatural. From taste, as well as from the precepts of his own philosophy, he was strongly indisposed to speculate on what may be called the nature or substance of the mind itself. We are conscious of past acts (he reasoned) as our own; we admit them, and are responsible for them, whatever the mind be. For practical and moral purposes that admission is enough. The acts, we are conscious, are ours, though done in the past; and so the living agent is the same. This reasoning, though sufficient for his immediate purpose, was soon abused by Collins and others, as Butler proceeds to show. Locke was corrected by Leibnitz, but most fully by Butler.]

[3] Locke, p. 146, 147.

[4] Locke, p. 152. "I am apt to think I have, in treating this subject, made some suppositions that will look strange to some readers, and possibly they are so in themselves."—*Essay*, b. ii. c. 27. s. 27.

observations have been carried to a strange length by others, whose notion, when traced and examined to the bottom, amounts, I think, to this:[5] "That personality is not a permanent but a transient thing; that it lives and dies, begins and ends continually; that no one can any more remain one and the same person two moments together, than two successive moments can be one and the same moment; that our substance is indeed continually changing, but whether this be so or not is, it seems, nothing to the purpose, since it is not substance but consciousness alone which constitutes personality; which consciousness, being successive, cannot be the same in any two moments, nor consequently the personality constituted by it." And from hence it must follow that it is a fallacy upon ourselves, to charge our present selves with any thing we did, or to imagine our present selves interested in any thing which befell us yesterday, or that our present self will be interested in what will befall us to-morrow; since our present self is not, in reality, the same with the self of yesterday, but another like self or person coming in its room, and mistaken for it; to which another self will succeed to-morrow. This, I say, must follow; for if the self or person of to-day, and that of to-morrow, are not the same, but only like persons; the person of to-day is really no more interested in what will befall the person of to-morrow, than in what will befall any other person. It may be thought, perhaps, that this is not a just representation of the opinion we are speaking of; because those who maintain it allow that a person is the same as far back as his remembrance reaches. And indeed they do use the *words*, *identity* and *same* person. Nor will language permit these words to be laid aside, since if they were there must be I know not what ridiculous periphrasis substituted in the room of them; but they cannot, consistently with themselves, mean that the person is really the same. For it is self-evident that the personality cannot be really the same if, as they expressly assert, that in which it consists is not the same. And as, consistently with themselves, they cannot, so, I think it appears, they do not mean that the person is

[5] See an Answer to Dr. Clarke's Third Defence of his Letter to Mr. Dodwell, 2nd edit. pp. 44. 56, etc.

really the same, but only that he is so in a fictitious sense; in such a sense only as they assert, for this they do assert that any number of persons whatever may be the same person. The bare unfolding this notion, and laying it thus naked and open, seems the best confutation of it. However, since great stress is said to be put upon it I add the following things.

First, this notion is absolutely contradictory to that certain conviction which necessarily and every moment rises within us, when we turn our thoughts upon ourselves, when we reflect upon what is past, and look forward upon what is to come. All imagination of a daily change of that living agent which each man calls himself for another, or of any such change throughout our whole present life, is entirely borne down by our natural sense of things. Nor is it possible for a person in his wits to alter his conduct with regard to his health or affairs, from a suspicion that though he should live to-morrow, he should not, however, be the same person he is to-day. And yet if it be reasonable to act, with respect to a future life, upon this notion, that personality is transient, it is reasonable to act upon it with respect to the present. Here then is a notion equally applicable to religion and to our temporal concerns, and every one sees and feels the inexpressible absurdity of it in the latter case; if, therefore, any can take up with it in the former, this cannot proceed from the reason of the thing, but must be owing to an inward unfairness and secret corruption of heart.

Secondly, it is not an idea or abstract notion, or quality, but a being only, which is capable of life and action, of happiness and misery. Now all beings confessedly continue the same during the whole time of their existence. Consider then a living being now existing, and which has existed for any time alive; this living being must have done and suffered and enjoyed, what it has done and suffered and enjoyed formerly, (this living being, I say, and not another,) as really as it does and suffers and enjoys, what it does and suffers and enjoys this instant. All these successive actions, enjoyments, and sufferings are actions, enjoyments, and sufferings of the same living being. And they are so prior to all consideration of its remembering or forgetting; since remembering or forgetting can make no alteration in the truth of

past matter of fact. And suppose this being endued with limited powers of knowledge and memory, there is no more difficulty in conceiving it to have a power of knowing itself to be the same living being which it was some time ago, of remembering some of its actions, sufferings, and enjoyments, and forgetting others, than in conceiving it to know or remember or forget any thing else.

Thirdly, every person is conscious that he is now the same person or self he was as far back as his remembrance reaches; since when any one reflects upon a past action of his own, he is just as certain of the person who did that action, namely himself, the person who now reflects upon it, as he is certain that the action was at all done. Nay, very often a person's assurance of an action having been done, of which he is absolutely assured, arises wholly from the consciousness that he himself did it. And this he, person, or self, must either be a substance or the property of some substance. If he, if person, be a substance, then consciousness that he is the same person is consciousness that he is the same substance. If the person, or he, be the property of a substance, still consciousness that he is the same property is as certain a proof that his substance remains the same, as consciousness that he remains the same substance would be; since the same property cannot be transferred from one substance to another.[6]

But though we are thus certain that we are the same agents, living beings, or substances now, which we were as far back as our remembrance reaches, yet it is asked whether we may not possibly be deceived in it? And this question may be asked at the end of any demonstration whatever; because it is a question concerning the truth of perception by memory. And he who can doubt whether perception by memory can in this case be depended upon, may doubt also whether perception by deduction and reasoning, which also

[6] [Property, it must be remembered, is defined by the logicians as a peculiar quality of anything essential to it; called, on this ground, an *essential mode*. Butler's reasoning here is open to an objection already intimated (see part i. chap. i. note). It rests too much on a merely verbal definition of the qualities of matter—a subject on which we know too little to deduce from our definitions trustworthy conclusions.]

include memory, or indeed whether intuitive perception can. Here then we can go no further.[7] For it is ridiculous to attempt to prove the truth of those perceptions, whose truth we can no otherwise prove than by other perceptions of
b exactly the same kind with them, and which there is just the same ground to suspect; or to attempt to prove the truth of our faculties, which can no otherwise be proved than by the use or means of those very suspected faculties themselves.

DISSERTATION II.

OF THE NATURE OF VIRTUE.[1]

A [INTRODUCTION.

1 Moral government implies a moral nature and moral faculties.

2 Proofs of the existence of such faculties are various.

3 Nor is there doubt as to the general qualities which those faculties approve, such as veracity, justice, and a regard for the public good.

[7] [Butler's reasoning in this chapter has very much the character of Dr. Reid's 'Philosophy,' giving to the instinctive principles of our nature a greater prominence than has often been given them by metaphysicians. This peculiarity, which secured for Reid's followers the title of the "common-sense school" of philosophy, that eminent inquirer owed probably in part to his study of Bacon and Butler, both of whom were favourites with him.]

[1] [To appreciate this dissertation, we need to keep in mind the theories in vogue when it was published. Within a hundred years Hobbes had published his theory of Human Nature, in which he taught that personal gratification was the sole end of every act, that every exercise of passion or faculty was equally authoritative, and that man has no moral faculties of perception or action. Cudworth and Clarke held in opposition to this theory that the distinction between right and wrong is eternal, and that the quality of moral acts is discerned by our reason. The first and last parts of Hobbes' theory Butler here refutes; the second he notices in his sermons. He admits, with Clarke, that the distinction between right and wrong is eternal, and that the distinction is

B Note then a few things concerning it.

1 Its object is not events but actions in connexion with principles or character; including therein will and intention-without necessary regard to the actual *power* of the agent

2 Our sense of actions as good or bad implies a sense of good or ill desert, which again involves

a That they deserve punishment or reward,

b Irrespective of any mischief or advantage to society; for an innocent action, which is yet mischievous, would be differently regarded.

c Ill desert supposes guilt, and seems necessarily connected with misery.

d In common cases of virtue good desert is thought but small, because little virtue may induce men to act well.

e In vice ill desert is lessened according to the temptation.

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founded on the fitness of things; but with characteristic wisdom he seeks the evidence of this distinction and one foundation for it in human nature. He holds also that our approbation of virtue is not an act of reason simply, but an emotion. His account of the origin of the idea of merit, and of its connexion with a reflex sense, is probably taken from Shaftesbury, to whose 'Characteristics' he frequently refers. By giving prudence a place among the virtues, he opposes Hutcheson, allows whatever of truth is to be found in Hobbes' system, and explains it. By denying that prudence is the whole of virtue, he meets the abuse which Hobbes committed, and which some modern writers have revived. Benevolence he reckons a most important virtue, and yet denies, against Leibnitz, that all virtue is resolvable into it. In his doctrine of a moral sense he agrees substantially with Hutcheson, his contemporary, and in the importance he attaches to the distinction between mere acts and the dispositions or principles from which they spring, he condemns Hobbes and sanctions Malebranche. In his third division he gives an idea of the "fitness of moral acts;" an idea more practical at all events than that of Clarke. His fifth division answers by anticipation the theory of Bentham, that virtue is a regard for the happiness of others; as the dissertation throughout answers the theory of Paley. Of course he maintains that virtue and happiness generally coincide, and in the long run will always coincide—the first parts of the Analogy being largely based on this view; but he denies that happiness or interest can be a rule to us, our rule being, in truth, God's will, as revealed in his word, or in the moral nature he has given.]

3 Ill desert implies a comparison of an act with the capacities of the agent; compare a child or idiot and a man. Unfit, unnatural, describe this perception.

4 Prudence (a reasonable desire to secure happiness) is approved, and imprudence condemned.

a This feeling quite independent of the tendency of imprudence to lessen happiness. We condemn the conduct, while pitying the condition.

b Though not so strenuously condemned as falsehood or cruelty, because (1) imprudence brings immediately its punishment, and is so self-corrective, and (2) then punishment excites pity, which lessens displeasure,

c Still it is condemned.

d Hence prudence is a species of virtue, and imprudence of vice,

e Whether or not we give them these names.

5 Virtue is not wholly benevolence, or vice wholly the opposite; for if they were

a Benevolence would be approved equally to whomever it was shown, and falsehood would be condemned only as injurious.

b To take from one and give to another, so adding to the sum of happiness, would be a virtue, whatever the morality.

c Injustice would be no fault, if it added to the sum of happiness; moreover,

d We are so made that we condemn falsehood, etc., without respect to overbalance of happiness, so that even if benevolence be God's sole end, it is not ours.

e Hence moral government must consist, not in the exercise of benevolence simply, but in treating men according to their moral nature.

f Most, perhaps, agree in these last principles, yet many seem disposed to hold that the whole of vice consists in its tendency to increase misery—a terrible mistake, which if admitted would excuse many flagrant crimes.

g And in truth creatures like men know not what they are about, when they attempt to promote happiness otherwise than through veracity and justice.

h When these are not opposed, however, then benevolence is our duty.

i Caution: though veracity is our rule, this does not forbid *all* acts or words not designed to deceive, nor likely to deceive, but through want of care and thought.]

THAT which renders beings capable of moral government, is their having a moral nature, and moral faculties of perception and of action. Brute creatures are impressed and actuated by various instincts and propensions: so also are we. But additional to this, we have a capacity of reflecting upon actions and characters, and making them an object to our thought: and on doing this, we naturally and unavoidably approve some actions, under the peculiar view of their being virtuous and of good desert; and disapprove others, as vicious and of ill desert. That we have this moral approving and disapproving[2] faculty, is certain from our experiencing it in ourselves, and recognising it in each other. It appears from our exercising it unavoidably, in the approbation and disapprobation even of feigned characters: from the words, *right* and *wrong*, *odious* and *amiable*, *base* and *worthy*, with many others of like signification in all languages, applied to actions and characters: from the many written systems of morals which suppose it: since it cannot be imagined, that all these authors, throughout all these treatises, had absolutely no meaning at all to their words, or a meaning merely chimerical: from our natural sense of gratitude, which implies a distinction between merely being the instrument of good, and intending it: from the like distinction, every one makes, between injury and mere harm, which, Hobbes says, is peculiar to mankind; and between injury and just punishment, a distinction plainly natural, prior to the consideration of human laws. It is manifest great part of common language, and of common behaviour

[2] This way of speaking is taken from Epictetus, Arr. Epict. l. i. c. i., and is made use of as seeming the most full, and least liable to cavil. And the moral faculty may be understood to have these two epithets, δοκιμαστικὴ (approving), and ἀποδοκιμαστικὴ (disapproving), upon a double account; because, upon a survey of actions, whether before or after they are done, it determines them to be good or evil; and also because it determines itself to be the guide of action and of life, in contradistinction from all other faculties, or natural principles of action: in the very same manner as speculative reason *directly* and naturally judges of speculative truth and falsehood; and at the same time is attended with a consciousness upon *reflection*, that the natural right to judge of them belongs to it.

over the world, is formed upon supposition of such a moral faculty; whether called conscience, moral reason, moral sense, or Divine reason; whether considered as a sentiment of the understanding, or as a perception of the heart; or,
B which seems the truth, as including both.[3] Nor is it at all doubtful in the general, what course of action this faculty, or practical discerning power within us, approves, and what it disapproves. For, as much as it has been disputed wherein virtue consists, or whatever ground for doubt there may be about particulars; yet, in general, there is in reality an universally acknowledged standard of it. It is that, which all ages and all countries have made profession of in public: it is that, which every man you meet puts on the show of: it is that, which the primary and fundamental laws of all civil constitutions over the face of the earth make it their business and endeavour to enforce the practice of upon mankind: namely, justice, veracity, and regard to common good. It being manifest, then, in general, that we have such a faculty
B or discernment as this, it may be of use to remark some things more distinctly concerning it.[4]

1 First, It ought to be observed, that the object of this faculty is actions,[5] comprehending under that name active or practical principles: those principles from which men would act, if occasions and circumstances gave them power;

[3] [Dr. Whewell has reversed this expression, and reads "as a perception of the understanding or as a sentiment of the heart" (Butler's Three Sermons, etc., p. 86). But the text is defensible as it stands, and even felicitous. Butler doubts whether to refer conscience to the understanding or to the heart: it has more of feeling than common judgments, and yet more of intelligence than common feeling. He calls it therefore, "a sentiment of the understanding," or "a perception of the heart;" and intimates that both sentiment and perception, or both heart and understanding, are included in it. Professor Fitzgerald notes a similar combination of phrases in Adam Smith's description of Hutcheson's System.—"*Theory of Moral Sentiments*," Part vi., chap. iii., p. 356.]

[4] [These remarks may be well applied to correct Paley's statements on conscience.—'Moral Philosophy,' Bk. i. chap. v.]

[5] Οὐδὲ ἡ ἀρετὴ καὶ κακία—ἐν πείσει, ἀλλὰ ἐνεργείᾳ, M. Anton. lib. ix. 13. Virtutis laus omnis in actione consistit. Cic. Off. lib. i. cap. 6. [Or as Mackintosh expresses it—the objects of this faculty are "the mental dispositions leading to voluntary action, and the

and which, when fixed and habitual in any person, we call his character. It does not appear, that brutes have the least reflex sense of actions, as distinguished from events: or that will and design, which constitute the very nature of actions as such, are at all an object to their perception. But to ours they are; and they are the object, and the only one, of the approving and disapproving faculty. Acting, conduct, behaviour, abstracted from all regard to what is, in fact and event, the consequence of it, is itself the natural object of the moral discernment; as speculative truth and falsehood is of speculative reason. Intention of such and such consequences, indeed, is always included; for it is part of the action itself; but though the intended good or bad consequences do not follow, we have exactly the same sense of the action as if they did. In like manner we think well or ill of characters, abstracted from all consideration of the good or the evil, which persons of such characters have it actually in their power to do. We never, in the moral way, applaud or blame either ourselves or others, for what we enjoy or what we suffer, or for having impressions made upon us which we consider as altogether out of our power; but only for what we do, or would have done, had it been in our power: or for what we leave undone, which we might have done, or would have left undone, though we could have done it.

Secondly, Our sense or discernment of actions as morally 2
good or evil, implies in it a sense or discernment of them as of good or ill desert.[6] It may be difficult to explain this per-

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voluntary actions which flow from these dispositions." It is this position so to speak of the faculty, between motive principles and outward gratification, checking and controlling all those principles, that constitutes the authoritativeness of the faculty and gives it its extensive application. It uses no means, has no outward ends, and is thus the most independent part of our nature.]

[6] [It is perhaps not necessary to point out the fallacy involved in applying the term 'merit' to acts of obedience to God, and thence claiming blessing as right, on the ground of desert. Between man and man, merit implies "a right to receive some good upon the score of some good done, and not due, together with an equivalence or parity of worth between them." Clearly no part of this

ception, so as to answer all the questions which may be asked concerning it; but every one speaks of such and such actions as deserving punishment; and it is not, I suppose, pretended, that they have absolutely no meaning at all to the expression. Now the meaning plainly is not, that we conceive it for the good of society, that the doer of such actions should be made to suffer. For if unhappily it were resolved, that a man, who, by some innocent action, was infected with the plague, should be left to perish, lest, by other people's coming near him, the infection should spread; no one would say he deserved this treatment. Innocence and ill-desert are inconsistent ideas. Ill-desert always supposes guilt; and if one be not part of the other, yet they are evidently and naturally connected in our mind. The sight of a man in misery raises our compassion towards him; and, if this misery be inflicted on him by another, our indignation against the author of it. But when we are informed, that the sufferer is a villain, and is punished only for his treachery or cruelty; our compassion exceedingly lessens, and in many instances our indignation wholly subsides. Now what produces this effect is the conception of that in the sufferer, which we call ill-desert. Upon considering then, or viewing together, our notion of vice and that of misery, there results a third, that of ill-desert. And thus there is in human creatures an association of the two ideas, natural and moral evil, wickedness and punishment. If this association were merely artificial or accidental, it were nothing; but being most unquestionably natural, it greatly concerns us to attend to it, instead of endeavouring to explain it away.

It may be observed further, concerning our perception of good and of ill desert, that the former is very weak with respect to common instances of virtue. One reason of which may be, that it does not appear to a spectator, how far such

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definition can apply to God. *All* obedience is *due* to him: When paid, it is "of his own" we have given him; nor is any *good* conferred on *God* by the gift. Hence there is no intrinsic merit (*i. e.*, nothing that can give of itself a *right* to reward) in any of our acts. The only possible merit which the case admits, is, that we give him what is *due*. See Luke xvii. 10; 'South's Sermons, iii.' Sermon i. In common usage, 'merit' expresses simply praiseworthiness; and 'demerit,' the opposite; 'good and ill desert,' as Butler calls them

instances of virtue proceed from a virtuous principle, or in what degree this principle is prevalent; since a very weak regard to virtue may be sufficient to make men act well in many common instances. And on the other hand, our perception of ill-desert in vicious actions lessens, in proportion to the temptations men are thought to have had to such vices. For, vice in human creatures consisting chiefly in the absence or want of the virtuous principle; though a man be overcome, suppose, by tortures, it does not from thence appear to what degree the virtuous principle was wanting. All that appears is, that he had it not in such a degree, as to prevail over the temptation; but possibly he had it in a degree, which would have rendered him proof against common temptations.

Thirdly, Our perception of vice and ill-desert arises from, 3
and is the result of, a comparison of actions with the nature and capacities of the agent. For the mere neglect of doing what we ought to do would, in many cases, be determined by all men to be in the highest degree vicious. And this determination must arise from such comparison, and be the result of it; because such neglect would not be vicious in creatures of other natures and capacities, as brutes. And it is the same also with respect to positive vices, or such as consist in doing what we ought not. For, every one has a different sense of harm done by an idiot, madman, or child, and by one of mature and common understanding; though the action of both, including the intention, which is part of the action, be the same; as it may be, since idiots and madmen, as well as children, are capable not only of doing mischief, but also of intending it. Now this difference must arise from somewhat discerned in the nature or capacities of one, which renders the action vicious; and the want of which, in the other, renders the same action innocent or less vicious; and this plainly supposes a comparison, whether reflected upon or not, between the action and capacities of the agent, previous to our determining an action to be vicious. And hence arises a proper application of the epithets, *incongruous*, *unsuitable*, *disproportionate*, *unfit*, to actions which our moral faculty determines to be vicious.

Fourthly, It deserves to be considered, whether men are 4
more at liberty, in point of morals, to make themselves

miserable without reason than to make other people so
or dissolutely to neglect their own greater good, for the
a sake of a present lesser gratification, than they are to neglect
the good of others, whom Nature has committed to their
care. It should seem, that a due concern about our own
interest or happiness, and a reasonable endeavour to secure
and promote it, which is, I think, very much the meaning of
the word *prudence*, in our language; it should seem, that
this is virtue, and the contrary behaviour faulty and blame-
able; since, in the calmest way of reflection, we approve of
the first, and condemn the other conduct, both in ourselves
b and others. This approbation and disapprobation are alto-
gether different from mere desire of our own, or of their
happiness, and from sorrow upon missing it. For the object
or occasion of this last kind of perception is satisfaction or
uneasiness: whereas the object of the first is active beha-
viour. In one case, what our thoughts fix upon is our con-
dition: in the other, our conduct. It is true indeed, that
Nature has not given us so sensible a disapprobation of
imprudence and folly, either in *ourselves* or *others*, as of false-
hood, injustice, and cruelty: I suppose, because that constant
habitual sense of private interest and good, which we always
1 carry about with us, renders such sensible disapprobation
less necessary, less wanting, to keep us from imprudently
neglecting our own happiness, and foolishly injuring our-
selves, than it is necessary and wanting to keep us from
injuring others, to whose good we cannot have so strong and
constant a regard: and also because imprudence and folly,
appearing to bring its own punishment more immediately
and constantly than injurious behaviour, it less needs the
additional punishment, which would be inflicted upon it by
others, had they the same sensible indignation against it, as
against injustice, and fraud, and cruelty. Besides, unhap-
piness being in itself the natural object of compassion; the
2 unhappiness which people bring upon themselves, though it
be wilfully, excites in us some pity for them: and this of
course lessens our displeasure against them. But still it is
matter of experience, that we are formed so as to reflect
c very severely upon the greater instances of imprudent neg-
lects and foolish rashness, both in ourselves and others. In
instances of this kind, men often say of themselves with

remorse, and of others with some indignation, that they deserved to suffer such calamities, because they brought them upon themselves, and would not take warning. Particularly when persons come to poverty and distress by a long course of extravagance, and after frequent admonitions, though without falsehood or injustice; we plainly do not regard such people as alike objects of compassion with those, who are brought into the same condition by unavoidable accidents. From these things it appears, that prudence is a species of virtue, and folly of vice: meaning by *folly*, somewhat quite different from mere incapacity; a thoughtless want of that regard and attention to our own happiness, which we had capacity for. And this the word properly includes; and, as it seems, in its usual acceptation: for we scarce apply it to brute creatures.

However, if any person be disposed to dispute the matter, I shall very willingly give him up the words virtue and vice, as not applicable to prudence and folly; but must beg leave to insist, that the faculty within us, which is the judge of actions, approves of prudent actions, and disapproves imprudent ones; I say prudent and imprudent *actions* as such, and considered distinctly from the happiness or misery which they occasion. And, by the way, this observation may help to determine what justness there is in that objection against religion, that it teaches us to be interested and selfish.

Fifthly, Without inquiring how far, and in what sense, 5 virtue is resolvable into benevolence, and vice into want of it: it may be proper to observe that benevolence, and the want of it, singly considered, are in no sort the whole of virtue and vice. For if this were the case, in the review of one's own character or that of others, our moral understanding and moral sense would be indifferent to everything but the degrees in which benevolence prevailed and the degrees in which it was wanting. That is, we should neither approve of benevolence to some persons rather than to others, nor disapprove injustice and falsehood upon any other account, than merely as an overbalance of happiness was foreseen likely to be produced by the first and of misery by the second. But now, on the contrary, suppose two men competitors for anything whatever, which would be of

equal advantage to each of them; though nothing indeed would be more impertinent, than for a stranger to busy himself to get one of them preferred to the other; yet such endeavour would be virtue, in behalf of a friend or benefactor, abstracted from all consideration of distant consequences; as that example of gratitude and the cultivation of friendship would be of general good to the world. Again,
b suppose one man should by fraud or violence take from another the fruit of his labour, with intent to give it to a third, who he thought would have as much pleasure from it as would balance the pleasure which the first possessor would have had in the enjoyment, and his vexation in the loss of it: suppose also that no bad consequences would follow, yet such an action would surely be vicious. Nay
c further, were treachery, violence, and injustice no otherwise vicious than as foreseen likely to produce an overbalance of misery to society; then, if in any case a man could procure to himself as great advantage by an act of injustice, as the whole foreseen inconvenience, likely to be brought upon others by it, would amount to; such a piece of injustice would not be faulty or vicious at all, because it would be no more than in any other case, for a man to prefer his own satisfaction to another's in equal degrees. The fact then appears
d to be, that we are constituted so as to condemn falsehood, unprovoked violence, injustice, and to approve of benevolence to some preferably to others, abstracted from all consideration which conduct is likeliest to produce an overbalance of happiness or misery.[7] And therefore, were the Author of Nature to propose nothing to himself as an end but the production of happiness, were his moral character merely that of benevolence, yet ours is not so. Upon that supposition indeed the only reason of his giving us the above-mentioned approbation of benevolence to some persons rather than others, and disapprobation of falsehood, unprovoked violence, and injustice, must be, that he foresaw this constitution of our nature would produce more happiness, than forming us with a temper of mere general benevolence. But still, since this is our constitution, falsehood, violence,

[7] [This remark was probably suggested by Mandeville's theory (see p. 59), and answers by anticipation the theory of Paley.]

injustice, must be vice in us, and benevolence to some, preferably to others, virtue; abstracted from all consideration of the overbalance of evil or good, which they may appear likely to produce.

Now if human creatures are endued with such a moral nature as we have been explaining, or with a moral faculty, the natural object of which is actions; moral government must consist in rendering them happy and unhappy, in rewarding and punishing them, as they follow, neglect, or depart from, the moral rule of action interwoven in their nature, or suggested and enforced by this moral faculty;[8] in rewarding and punishing them upon account of their so doing.

[8] [Compare with this passage on the danger of making utility or benevolence our rule, the statements at the end of Sermon iii. From the two passages we may learn the peculiarity in this respect of Butler's system. He held, as did Paley, that all virtue *is* conducive both to individual and to general happiness, *always* really useful, and in the end, obviously useful. But he strenuously denies that utility is the quality in acts for which we deem them virtuous; or that the utility of an act is any satisfactory rule (with us) to decide whether it ought to be performed. The apparent exceptions to this statement are not few, and it will be remembered that Paley bases his entire system of ethics on the usefulness of acts, and shows that rules so framed agree in the main with those founded on other principles. Butler himself reasons against revenge, on the ground that it would soon, if indulged, destroy society; *i. e.*, he proves the duty of the forgiveness of injuries (Sermon ix.) by referring, not to conscience, but to the consequences of retaliation. The following facts, however, need to be remembered, and it will be found that they explain the whole. (1.) In some cases the morality of an act is, apart from its results, indifferent: of two such acts (equally innocent) the one that effects most good in the result is for that reason to be preferred. But clearly it does not follow that utility is the rule of acts in *themselves moral*. (2.) On some questions the rule that ought to guide conscience is not clear. She needs teaching; and the appeal is either to Scripture, or if Scripture is inaccessible, or there are doubts as to its meaning, to the consequences of acts. Such cases, however, are comparatively rare, and the only conclusion they justify is, that duty may sometimes be decided, even in moral acts, by studying results. (3.) In all such cases, however, and in every other, the utility is not directly the ground of moral obligation.

I am not sensible that I have, in this fifth observation, contradicted what any author designed to assert. But some of great and distinguished merit have, I think, expressed themselves in a manner which may occasion some danger, to careless readers, of imagining the whole of virtue to consist in singly aiming, according to the best of their judgment, at promoting the happiness of mankind in the present state; and the whole of vice, in doing what they foresee, or might foresee, is likely to produce an overbalance of unhappiness in it; than which mistakes, none can be conceived more terrible.[9] For it is certain, that some of the most shocking instances of injustice, adultery, murder, perjury, and even of persecution, may, in many supposable cases, not have the appearance of being likely to produce an overbalance of misery in the present state; perhaps sometimes may have the contrary appearance. For this reflection might easily be carried on, but I forbear. The happiness of the world is the concern of him, who is the lord and the proprietor of it; nor do we know what we are about, when we endeavour to promote the good of mankind in any ways but those which he has directed; that is, indeed, in all ways not contrary to veracity and justice. I speak thus upon supposition of persons really endeavouring, in some sort, to do good without regard to these. But the truth seems to be, that such supposed endeavours proceed, almost always, from ambition, the spirit of party, or some indirect principle, concealed, perhaps, in great measure from persons themselves. And though it is our business and our duty to endeavour, within the bounds of veracity and justice, to contribute to the ease, convenience, and even cheerfulness and diversion of our fellow-creatures; yet, from our short views, it is greatly uncertain, whether this endeavour will, in particular instances, produce an overbalance of happiness upon the whole; since so many and distant things must come into the

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The utility shows what *God's will* is, and on that will (or on what is right) our obligation rests. To do a thing because it is *useful* is one thing; to do a thing because it is right, every one feels to be *another*. The theory that makes utility identical with morality—not coincident simply—confounds the two.]

[9] Page 125.

account And that which makes it our duty is, that there is some appearance that it will, and no positive appearance sufficient to balance this, on the contrary side; and also, that such benevolent endeavour is a cultivation of that most excellent of all virtuous principles, the active principle of benevolence.

However, though veracity, as well as justice, is to be our rule of life, it must be added, otherwise a snare will be laid in the way of some plain men, that the use of common forms of speech, generally understood, cannot be falsehood; and, in general, that there can be no designed falsehood without designing to deceive. It must likewise be observed, that in numberless cases, a man may be under the strictest obligations to what he foresees will deceive without his intending it. For it is impossible not to foresee, that the words and actions of men, in different ranks and employments, and of different educations, will perpetually be mistaken by each other; and it cannot but be so, whilst they will judge with the utmost carelessness, as they daily do, of what they are not, perhaps, enough informed to be competent judges of, even though they considered it with great attention.[10]

[10] [Connecting this Dissertation with the three Sermons on Human Nature, and with the 1st chapter of the 2nd part of the Analogy, we have a fairly complete view of Butler's ethical system. Sir J. Mackintosh has noticed a distinction of great importance in all ethical discussions: what is the quality in any act which induces men to pronounce it virtuous is *one* question; what is the nature of the feelings with which they regard it is altogether another. Sir James deems it a deficiency in Butler's system that he has not given an answer to the first question, though to the second his answer is complete. If, however, we compare the passages indicated above, it will be found that the historian of modern ethics is hardly just to our author. Butler affirms repeatedly, that the characteristic quality of a moral act is *not* its utility, though the act is always useful; it is rather its harmony with the relations in which men stand (Anal. pt. ii. ch. 1), as when we say that gratitude is what is due to a benefactor; or its suitableness to their nature, or its intrinsic veracity or justness, its rightness or wrongness, or its agreement with the will and character of God. If it be said that he has not clearly defined the quality, it must be answered, that neither has modern inquiry, which is even disposed to regard the quality as itself not further definable, (see Wayland,

p. 44), and that, above all, he insists everywhere on the existence of this quality in all moral acts, quite independently of their tendencies. That Mackintosh has overlooked this dissertation and the ethical discussions of the Analogy is not probable; but certainly Butler has set forth the "Criterion of Morality" more clearly than the historian supposed. On Butler's "Theory of Moral Sentiments," see note at the end of the Sermon iii.]

FIFTEEN SERMONS

PREACHED AT THE CHAPEL OF THE ROLLS COURT.

UPON THE FOLLOWING SUBJECTS:

Upon Human Nature [i. ii. iii.]
Upon the Government of the Tongue [iv.]
Upon Compassion [v. vi.]
Upon the Character of Balaam [vii.]
Upon Resentment [viii.]
Upon Forgiveness of Injuries [ix.]
Upon Self Deceit [x.]
Upon the Love of our Neighbour [xi. xii.]
Upon the Love of God [xiii. xiv.]
Upon the Ignorance of Man [xv.]

BY JOSEPH BUTLER, LL.D.

THE

PREFACE.

Though it is scarce possible to avoid judging, in some way or other, of almost every thing which offers itself to one's thoughts; yet it is certain that many persons, from different causes, never exercise their judgment, upon what comes before them, in the way of determining whether it be conclusive and holds. They are perhaps entertained with some things, not so with others; they like and they dislike: but whether that which is proposed to be made out, be really made out or not; whether a matter be stated according to the real truth of the case, seems to the generality of people merely a circumstance of no consideration at all. Arguments are often wanted for some accidental purpose: but proof as such is what they never want for themselves; for their own satisfaction of mind, or conduct in life. Not to mention the multitudes who read merely for the sake of talking, or to qualify themselves for the world, or some such kind of reasons; there are, even of the few who read for their own entertainment, and have a real curiosity to see what is said, several of which is prodigious, who have no sort of curiosity to see what is true: I say curiosity; because it is too obvious to be mentioned, how much that religious and sacred attention, which is due to truth, and to the important question, what is the rule of life, is lost out of the world.

For the sake of this whole class of readers, for they are of different capacities, different kinds, and get into this way from different occasions, I have often wished, that it had been the custom to lay before people nothing in matters of argument but premises, and leave them to draw conclusions themselves; which, though it could not be done in all cases, might in many

The great number of books and papers of amusement, which, of one kind or another, daily come in one's way, have in part occasioned, and most perfectly fall in with, and humour, this idle way of reading and considering things. By this means, time even in solitude is happily got rid of, without the pain of attention: neither is any part of it more put to the account of idleness, one can scarce forbear saying, is spent with less thought, than great part of that which is spent in reading.

Thus people habituate themselves to let things pass through their minds, as one may speak, rather than to think of them. Thus by use they become satisfied merely with seeing what is said, without going any further. Review and attention, and even forming a judgment, becomes fatigue; and to lay any thing before them that requires it, is putting them quite out of their way.

There are also persons, and there are at least more of them than have a right to claim such superiority, who take for granted, that they are acquainted with everything; and that no subject if treated in the manner it should be, can be treated in any manner but what is familiar and easy to them.

It is true indeed, that few persons have a right to demand attention; but it is also true, that nothing can be understood without that degree of it, which the very nature of the thing requires. Now morals, considered as a science, concerning which speculative difficulties are daily raised, and treated with regard to those difficulties, plainly require a very peculiar attention. For here ideas never are in themselves determinate, but become so, by the train of reasoning and the place they stand in; since it is impossible that words can always stand for the same ideas, even in the same author, much less in different ones. Hence an argument may not readily be apprehended, which is different from its being mistaken; and even caution to avoid, being mistaken, may, in some cases, render it less readily apprehended. It is very unallowable for a work of imagination or entertainment not to be of easy comprehension, but may be unavoidable in a work of another kind, where a man is not to form or accommodate, but to state things as he finds them.

It must be acknowledged that some of the following discourses are very abstruse and difficult; or, if you please, obscure: but I must take leave to add, that those alone are judges, whether or no and how far this is a fault, who are judges, whether or no and how far it might have been avoided —those only who will be at the trouble to understand what is here said, and to see how far the things here insisted upon and not other things, might have been put in a plainer manner; which yet I am very far from asserting that they could not.

Thus much however will be allowed, that general criticisms concerning obscurity considered as a distinct thing from confusion and perplexity of thought, as in some cases there may be ground for them; so in others, they may be nothing more at the bottom than complaints, that everything is not to be understood with the same ease that some things are. Confusion and perplexity in writing, is indeed without excuse, because any one may, if he pleases, know whether he understands and sees through what he is about: and it is unpardonable for a man to lay his thoughts before others, when he is conscious that he himself does not know whereabouts he is, or how the matter before him stands. It is coming abroad in disorder, which he ought to be dissatisfied to find himself in at home.

But even obscurities arising from other causes than the abstruseness of the argument, may not be always inexcusable. Thus a subject may be treated in a manner, which all along supposes the reader acquainted with what has been said upon it, both by ancient and modern writers; and with what is the present state of opinion in the world concerning such subject. This will create a difficulty of a very peculiar kind, and even throw an obscurity over the whole before those who are not thus informed; but those who are, will be disposed to excuse such a manner, and other things of the like kind, as a saving of their patience.

However upon the whole, as the title of sermons gives some right to expect what is plain and of easy comprehension, and as the best auditories are mixed, I shall not set about to justify the propriety of preaching, or under that title publishing, discourses so abstruse as some of these are

neither is it worth while to trouble the reader with the account of my doing either. He must not however impute to me, as a repetition of the impropriety, this second edition[1], but to the demand for it.

Whether he will think he has any amends made him, by the following illustrations of what seemed most to require them, I myself am by no means a proper judge.

[i. ii. iii.] There are two ways in which the subject of morals may be treated. One begins from inquiring into the abstract relations of things: the other from a matter of fact, namely, what the particular nature of man is, its several parts, their economy or constitution; from whence it proceeds to determine what course of life it is, which is correspondent to this whole nature. In the former method, the conclusion is expressed thus, that vice is contrary to the nature and reason of things: in the latter, that it is a violation or breaking in upon our own nature. Thus they both lead us to the same thing, our obligations to the practice of virtue; and thus they exceedingly strengthen and enforce each other. The first seems the most direct formal proof, and in some respects the least liable to cavil and dispute: the latter is in a peculiar manner adapted to satisfy a fair mind; and is more easily applicable to the several particular relations and circumstances in life.

The following discourses proceed chiefly in this latter method. The first three wholly. They were intended to explain what is meant by the nature of man, when it is said that virtue consists in following, and vice in deviating from it; and by explaining to show that the assertion is true. That the ancient moralists had some inward feeling or other, which they chose to express in this manner, that man is born to virtue, that it consists in following nature, and that vice is more contrary to this nature than tortures or death, their works in our hands are instances. Now a person who found no mystery in this way of speaking of the ancients; who without being very explicit with himself, kept to his natural feeling, went along with them, and found within himself a full conviction that what they laid down was just

[1] The Preface stands exactly as it did before the second edition of the Sermons.

and true; such a one would probably wonder to see a po[illegible] in which he never perceived any difficulty, so labour[illegible]them. this is, in the second and third sermons; insomuch [illegible]of ex- as to be at a loss for the occasion, scope and drift of [illegible] car- But it need not be thought strange that this manner [illegible]ould pression, though familiar with them, and, if not usual[illegible]aily ried so far, yet not uncommon amongst ourselves, sh[illegible]first want explaining; since there are several perceptions [illegible]er- felt and spoken of, which yet it may not be very easy at any view to explicate, to distinguish from all others, and as[illegible] so tain exactly what the idea or perception is. The moral treatises upon the passions are a proof of this; since [illegible] many would never have undertaken to unfold their sever[illegible] complications, and trace and resolve them into their pri[illegible] ciples, if they had thought what they were endeavouring t[illegible] show was obvious to every one who felt and talked of those passions. Thus, though there seem no ground to doubt, but that the generality of mankind have the inward perception expressed so commonly in that manner by the ancient moralists, more than to doubt whether they have those passions; yet it appeared of use to unfold that inward conviction, and lay it open in a more explicit manner than I had seen done; especially when there were not wanting persons who manifestly mistook the whole thing, and so had great reason to express themselves dissatisfied with it. A late author of great and deserved reputation says, that to place virtue in following Nature, is at best a loose way of talk. And he has reason to say this, if what I think he intends to express, though with great decency, be true, that scarce any other sense can be put upon those words, but acting as any of the several parts without distinction, of a man's nature happened most to incline him.[2]

Whoever thinks it worth while to consider this matter thoroughly, should begin with stating to himself exactly the idea of a system, economy, or constitution of any particular nature, or particular anything; and he will, I suppose, find that it is a one or a whole, made up of several parts; but yet, that the several parts even considered as a whole, do not complete the idea, unless in the notion of a whole, you in

[2] Rel. of Nature Delin. Ed. 1724. P. 22, 23.

clude the relations and respects which those parts have to each other. Every work, both of Nature and of art, is a system; and as every particular thing, both natural and artificial, is for some use or purpose out of and beyond itself, one may add to what has been already brought into the idea of a system, its conduciveness to this one or more ends. Let us instance in a watch; suppose the several parts of it taken to pieces and placed apart from each other; let a man have ever so exact a notion of these several parts, unless he considers the respects and relations which they have to each other, he will not have anything like the idea of a watch. Suppose these several parts brought together and anyhow united; neither will he yet, be the union ever so close, have an idea which will bear any resemblance to that of a watch. But let him view those several parts put together, or consider them as to be put together in the manner of a watch; let him form a notion of the relations which those several parts have to each other, all conducive in their respective ways to this purpose, showing the hour of the day; and then he has the idea of a watch. Thus it is with regard to the inward frame of a man. Appetites, passions, affections, and the principle of reflection, considered merely as the several parts of our inward nature, do not at all give us an idea of the system or constitution of this nature; because the constitution is formed by somewhat not yet taken into consideration, namely by the relation, which these several parts have to each other; the chief of which is the authority of reflection or conscience. It is from considering the relations which the several appetites and passions in the inward frame have to each other, and above all the supremacy of reflection or conscience, that we get the idea of the system or constitution of human nature; and from the idea itself it will as fully appear, that this our nature, *i. e.* constitution, is adapted to virtue, as from the idea of a watch it appears that its nature, *i. e.* constitution or system, is adapted to measure time. What in fact or event commonly happens, is nothing to this question. Every work of art is apt to be out of order; but this is so far from being according to its system, that let the disorder increase, and it will totally destroy it. This is merely by way of explanation, what an economy, system or constitution is; and thus far the cases

are perfectly parallel. If we go further there is indeed difference, nothing to the present purpose, but too importan a one ever to be omitted. A machine is inanimate an passive, but we are agents. Our constitution is put in ou own power; we are charged with it, and therefore are ac countable for any disorder or violation of it.

Thus nothing can possibly be more contrary to natur than vice; meaning by nature, not only *the several parts* o our internal frame, but also the *constitution* of it. Povert and disgrace, tortures and death are not so contrary to i Misery and injustice are indeed equally contrary to som different parts of our nature taken singly; but injustice moreover contrary to the whole constitution of the nature.

If it be asked whether this constitution be really wha those philosophers meant, and whether they would hav explained themselves in this manner; the answer is th same, as if it should be asked, whether a person who ha often used the word resentment and felt the thing, wou have explained this passion exactly in the same manner, which it is done in one of these discourses. As I have doubt, but that this is a true account of that passion, whic he referred to, and intended to express by the word resen ment; so I have no doubt, but that this is the true accou of the ground of that conviction which they referred t when they said, vice was contrary to nature. And thoug it should be thought that they meant no more than, th vice was contrary to the higher and better part of o nature; even this implies such a constitution as I ha endeavoured to explain. For the very terms higher a better imply a relation or respect of parts to each othe and these relative parts, being in one and the same natu form a constitution and are the very idea of it. They h a perception that injustice was contrary to their nature, a that pain was so also. They observed these two perceptio totally different, not in degree, but in kind; and the refle ing upon each of them as they thus stood in their natu wrought a full intuitive conviction, that more was due a of right belonged to one of these inward perceptions, th to the other; that it demanded in all cases to govern su a creature as man. So that upon the whole, this is a fa and true account of what was the ground of their convictio

of what they intended to refer to when they said, virtue consisted in following nature; a manner of speaking not loose and undeterminate, but clear and distinct, strictly just and true.

Though I am persuaded the force of this conviction is felt by almost every one, yet since, considered as an argument and put in words, it appears somewhat abstruse, and since the connexion of it is broken in the first three sermons, it may not be amiss to give the reader the whole argument here in one view.

Mankind has various instincts and principles of action, as brute creatures have; some leading most directly and immediately to the good of the community, and some most directly to private good.

Man has several which brutes have not: particularly reflection or conscience, an approbation of some principles or actions, and disapprobation of others.

Brutes obey their instincts or principles of action, according to certain rules; suppose the constitution of their body, and the objects around them.

The generality of mankind also obey their instincts and principles, all of them; those propensions we call good, as well as the bad, according to the same rules, namely, the constitution of their body, and the external circumstances which they are in. [Therefore it is not a true representation of mankind, to affirm that they are wholly governed by self-love, the love of power, and sensual appetites; since, as on the one hand, they are often actuated by these, without any regard to right or wrong; so on the other, it is manifest fact, that the same persons, the generality, are frequently influenced by friendship, compassion, gratitude; and even a general abhorrence of what is base, and liking of what is fair and just, takes its turn amongst the other motives of action. This is the partial inadequate notion of human nature treated of in the first discourse; and it is by this nature, if one may speak so, that the world is in fact influenced, and kept in that tolerable order, in which it is.]

Brutes in acting according to the rules before-mentioned, their bodily constitution and circumstances, act suitably to their whole nature. [It is, however, to be distinctly noted, that the reason why we affirm this, is not merely that

brutes in fact act so; for this alone, however universal, does not at all determine, whether such course of action be correspondent to their whole nature; but the reason of the assertion is, that as in acting thus they plainly act conformably to somewhat in their nature, so from all observations we are able to make upon them, there does not appear the least ground to imagine them to have anything else in their nature, which requires a different rule or course of action.]

Mankind also in acting thus would act suitably to their whole nature, if no more were to be said of man's nature, than what has been now said; if that, as it is a true, were also a complete, adequate account of our nature.

But that is not a complete account of man's nature. Somewhat further must be brought in to give us an adequate notion of it; namely, that one of those principles of action, conscience, or reflection, compared with the rest as they all stand together in the nature of man, plainly bears upon it marks of authority over all the rest, and claims the absolute direction of them all, to allow or forbid their gratification; a disapprobation of reflection being in itself a principle manifestly superior to a mere propension. And the conclusion is, that to allow no more to this superior principle or part of our nature, than to other parts; to let it govern and guide only occasionally in common with the rest, as its turn happens to come, from the temper and circumstances one happens to be in; this is not to act conformably to the constitution of man; neither can any human creature be said to act conformably to his constitution of nature, unless he allows to that superior principle the absolute authority which is due to it. And this conclusion is abundantly confirmed from hence, that one may determine what course of action the economy of man's nature requires, without so much as knowing in what degree of *strength* the several principles prevail, or which of them have actually the greatest influence.

The practical reason of insisting so much upon this natural authority of the principle of reflection or conscience is, that it seems in great measure overlooked by many, who are by no means the worse sort of men. It is thought sufficient to abstain from gross wickedness, and to be humane and kind to such as happen to come in their way. Whereas in reality the

very constitution of our nature requires, that we bring our whole conduct before this superior faculty; wait its determination, enforce upon ourselves its authority, and make it the business of our lives, as it is absolutely the whole business of a moral agent, to conform ourselves to it. This is the true meaning of that ancient precept, *Reverence thyself*.

The not taking into consideration this authority, which is implied in the idea of reflex approbation or disapprobation, seems a material deficiency or omission in *Lord Shaftesbury's Inquiry concerning Virtue*. He has shown beyond all contradiction that virtue is naturally the interest or happiness, and vice the misery of such a creature as man, placed in the circumstances which we are in this world. But suppose there are particular exceptions; a case which this author was unwilling to put, and yet surely it is to be put; or suppose a case which he has put and determined, that of a sceptic not convinced of this happy tendency of virtue, or being of a contrary opinion. His determination is, that it would be *without remedy*.[3] One may say more explicitly that leaving out the authority of reflex approbation or disapprobation, such a one would be under an obligation to act viciously; since interest, one's own happiness, is a manifest obligation, and there is not supposed to be any other obligation in the case. "But does it much mend the matter, to take in that natural authority of reflection? there indeed would be an obligation to virtue; but would not the obligation from supposed interest on the side of vice remain?" If it should, yet to be under two contrary obligations, *i. e.* under none at all, would not be exactly the same, as to be under a formal obligation to be vicious, or to be in circumstances in which the constitution of man's nature plainly required that vice should be preferred. But the obligation on the side of interest really does not remain. For the natural authority of the principle of reflection, is an obligation the most near and intimate, the most certain and known; whereas the contrary obligation can at the utmost appear no more than probable; since no man can be *certain* in any circumstances that vice is his interest in the present world, much less can

[3] Characteristics, vol. ii., p. 69.

he be certain against another; and thus the certain obligation would entirely supersede and destroy the uncertain one; which yet would have been of real force without the former.

In truth the taking in this consideration, totally changes the whole state of the case; and shows what this author does not seem to have been aware of, that the greatest degree of scepticism which he thought possible, will still leave men under the strictest moral obligations, whatever their opinion be concerning the happiness of virtue. For that mankind upon reflection felt an approbation of what was good, and disapprobation of the contrary, he thought a plain matter of fact, as it undoubtedly is, which none could deny, but from mere affectation. Take in then that authority and obligation, which is a constituent part of this reflex approbation, and it will undeniably follow, though a man should doubt of everything else, yet that he would still remain under the nearest and most certain obligation to the practice of virtue; an obligation implied in the very idea of virtue, in the very idea of reflex approbation.

And how little influence soever this obligation alone can be expected to have in fact upon mankind, yet one may appeal even to interest and self-love, and ask, since from man's nature, condition, and the shortness of life, so little, so very little indeed, can possibly in any case be gained by vice; whether it be so prodigious a thing to sacrifice that little, to the most intimate of all obligations; and which a man cannot transgress without being self-condemned, and, unless he has corrupted his nature, without real self-dislike: this question I say may be asked, even upon supposition that the prospect of a future life were ever so uncertain.

The observation that man is thus by his very nature a law to himself, pursued to its just consequences, is of the utmost importance; because from it it will follow, that though men should, through stupidity or speculative scepticism, be ignorant of or disbelieve any authority in the universe to punish the violation of this law; yet, if there should be such authority, they would be as really liable to punishment, as though they had been before-hand convinced, that such punishment would follow. For in whatever sense we understand justice,

even supposing, what I think would be very presumptuous to assert, that the end of Divine punishment is no other than that of civil punishment, namely, to prevent future mischief: upon this bold supposition, ignorance, or disbelief of the sanction would by no means exempt even from this justice: because it is not foreknowledge of the punishment, which renders it obnoxious to it; but merely violating a known obligation.

And here it comes in one's way to take notice of a manifest error or mistake, in the author now cited, unless perhaps he has incautiously expressed himself so as to be misunderstood; namely, that it is malice only, and not goodness, which can make us afraid.[4] Whereas in reality, goodness is the natural and just object of the greatest fear to an ill man. Malice may be appeased or satiated: humour may change: but goodness is a fixed, steady, immovable principle of action. If either of the former holds the sword of justice, there is plainly ground for the greatest of crimes to hope for impunity, but if it be goodness, there can be no possible hope, whilst the reasons of things, or the ends of government, call for punishment. Thus every one sees how much greater chance of impunity an ill man has in a partial administration, than in a just and upright one. It is said that the interest or good of the whole, must be the interest of the universal being, and that he can have no other. Be it so. This author has proved that vice is naturally the misery of mankind in this world. Consequently it was for the good of the whole, that it should be so. What shadow of reason then is there to assert, that this may not be the case hereafter? Danger of future punishment (and if there be danger, there is ground of fear) no more supposes malice, than the present feeling of punishment does.

[vii. x.] The sermon upon the character of Balaam, and that upon self-deceit both relate to one subject. I am persuaded, that a very great part of the wickedness of the world is, in one way or other, owing to the self-partiality, self-flattery, and self-deceit endeavoured there to be laid open and explained. It is to be observed amongst persons of the lowest rank, in proportion to their compass of thought, as much as

[4] Characteristics, vol. i., p. 39.

amongst men of education and improvement. It seems, that people are capable of being thus artful with themselves, in proportion as they are capable of being so with others. Those who have taken notice that there is really such a thing, namely, plain falseness and insincerity in men with regard to themselves, will readily see the drift and design of these discourses: and nothing, that I can add, will explain the design of them to him, who has not before-hand remarked, at least, somewhat of the character. And yet, the admonitions they contain, may be as much wanted by such a person, as by others; for it is to be noted, that a man may be entirely possessed by this unfairness of mind, without having the least speculative notion what the thing is.

[viii.] The account given of resentment in the eighth sermon, is introductory to the following one upon forgiveness of injuries. It may possibly have appeared to some, at first sight, a strange assertion, that injury is the only natural object of settled resentment, or that men do not in fact resent deliberately anything but under this appearance of injury. But I must desire the reader not to take any assertion alone by itself, but to consider the whole of what is said upon it: because this is necessary, not only in order to judge of the truth of it, but often, such is the nature of language, to see the very meaning of the assertion. Particularly as to this, injury and injustice is, in the sermon itself, explained to mean, not only the more gross and shocking instances of wickedness, but also contempt, scorn, neglect, any sort of disagreeable behaviour towards a person, which he thinks other than what is due to him. And the general notion of injury or wrong, plainly comprehends this, though the words are mostly confined to the higher degrees of it.

[ix.] Forgiveness of injuries is one of the very few moral obligations which has been disputed. But the proof that it is really an obligation, what our nature and condition require, seems very obvious, were it only from the consideration that revenge is doing harm merely for harm's sake. And as to the love of our enemies: resentment cannot supersede the obligation to universal benevolence, unless they are in the nature of the thing inconsistent, which they plainly are not.

[5] Sermon ix., p. 449

This Divine precept, to forgive injuries and love our enemies, though to be met with in Gentile moralists, yet is in a peculiar sense a precept of Christianity; as our Saviour has insisted more upon it, than upon any other single virtue. One reason of this doubtless is, that it so peculiarly becomes an imperfect, faulty creature. But it may be observed also, that a virtuous temper of mind, consciousness of innocence and good meaning towards every body, and a strong feeling of injustice and injury, may itself, such is the imperfection of our virtue, lead a person to violate this obligation, if he be not upon his guard. And it may well be supposed, that this is another reason why it is so much insisted upon by Him, who knew what was in man.

[xi. xii.] The chief design of the eleventh discourse is to state the notion of self-love and disinterestedness, in order to show that benevolence is not more unfriendly to self-love, than any other particular affection whatever. There is a strange affection in many people of explaining away all particular affections, and representing the whole of life as nothing but one continued exercise of self-love. Hence arises that surprising confusion and perplexity in the Epicureans[a] of old, Hobbes, the author of "Reflections, Sentences, et Maximes Morales," and this whole set of writers; the confusion of calling actions interested which are done in contradiction to the most manifest known interest, merely for the gratification of a present passion. Now all this confusion might easily be avoided, by stating to ourselves wherein the idea of self-love in general consists, as distinguished from all particular movements towards particular external objects; the appetites

[a] One need only look into Torquatus's account of the Epicurean system, in Cicero's first book De Finibus, to see, in what a surprising manner this was done by them. Thus the desire of praise, and of being beloved, he explains to be no other than desire of safety: regard to our country, even in the most virtuous character, to be nothing but regard to ourselves. The author of "Reflections, etc. Morales," says, curiosity proceeds from interest or pride; which pride also would doubtless have been explained to be self-love. Page 85. Ed. 1725. As if there were no such passions in mankind, as desire of esteem, or of being beloved, or of knowledge. Hobbes' account of the affections of good-will and pity, are instances of the same kind.

of sense, resentment, compassion, curiosity, ambition, and the rest.[7] When this is done, if the words selfish and interested cannot be parted with, but must be applied to everything; yet, to avoid such total confusion of all language, let the distinction be made by epithets: and the first may be called cool or settled selfishness, and the other passionate or sensual selfishness. But the most natural way of speaking plainly is, to call the first only, self-love, and the actions proceeding from it, interested: and to say of the latter, that they are not love to ourselves, but movements towards somewhat external: honour, power, the harm or good of another: and that the pursuit of these external objects, so far as it proceeds from these movements (for it may proceed from self-love[8]) is no otherwise interested, than as every action of every creature must, from the nature of the thing, be; for no one can act but from a desire, or choice, or preference of his own.

Self-love and any particular passion may be joined together: and from this complication, it becomes impossible in numberless instances to determine precisely, how far an action, perhaps even of one's own, has for its principle general self-love, or some particular passion. But this need create no confusion in the ideas themselves of self-love and particular passions. We distinctly discern what one is, and what the other are: though we may be uncertain how far one or the other influences us. And though from this uncertainty, it cannot but be, that there will be different opinions concerning mankind, as more or less governed by interest; and some will ascribe actions to self-love, which others will ascribe to particular passions: yet it is absurd to say that mankind are wholly actuated by either; since it is manifest that both have their influence. For as on the one hand, men form a general notion of interest, some placing it in one thing, and some in another, and have a considerable regard to it throughout the course of their life, which is owing to self-love; so on the other hand, they are often set on work by the particular passions themselves, and a considerable part of life is spent in the actual gratification of them, *i. e.* is employed, not by self-love, but by the passions.

[7] P. 469, etc. [8] See the note, p. 360.

Besides, the very idea of an interested pursuit, necessarily presupposes particular passions or appetites; since the very idea of interest or happiness consists in this, that an appetite or affection enjoys its object. It is not because we love ourselves that we find delight in such and such objects, but because we have particular affections towards them. Take away these affections, and you leave self-love absolutely nothing at all to employ itself about;[9] no end or object for it to pursue, excepting only that of avoiding pain. Indeed the Epicureans, who maintained that absence of pain was the highest happiness, might, consistently with themselves, deny all affection, and, if they had so pleased, every sensual appetite too: but the very idea of interest or happiness other than absence of pain implies particular appetites or passions; these being necessary to constitute that interest or happiness.

The observation that benevolence is no more disinterested than any of the common particular passions,[10] seems in itself worth being taken notice of: but is insisted upon to obviate that scorn, which one sees rising upon the faces of people who are said to know the world, when mention is made of a disinterested, generous or public-spirited action. The truth of that observation might be made appear, in a more formal manner of proof: for whoever will consider all the possible respects and relations which any particular affection can have to self-love and private interest, will, I think, see demonstrably, that benevolence is not in any respect more at variance with self-love, than any other particular affection whatever, but that it is in every respect, at least, as friendly to it.

If the observation be true, it follows, that self-love and benevolence, virtue and interest, are not to be opposed, but only to be distinguished from each other; in the same way a virtue and any other particular affection, love of arts, suppose, are to be distinguished. Every thing is what it is, and not another thing. The goodness or badness of actions does not arise from hence, that the epithet, interested or disinterested, may be applied to them, any more than that any other indifferent epithet, suppose inquisitive or jealous, may or may not

[9] P. 471 [10] P. 473, etc.

be applied to them; not from their being attended with present or future pleasure or pain: but from their being what they are: namely, what becomes such creatures as we are, what the state of the case requires, or the contrary. Or in other words, we may judge and determine, that an action is morally good or evil, before we so much as consider, whether it be interested or disinterested. This consideration no more comes in to determine, whether an action be virtuous, than to determine whether it be resentful. Self-love in its due degree is as just and morally good, as any affection whatever. Benevolence towards particular persons may be to a degree of weakness, and so be blamable: and disinterestedness is so far from being in itself commendable, that the utmost possible depravity, which we can in imagination conceive, is that of disinterested cruelty.

Neither does there appear any reason to wish self-love were weaker in the generality of the world, than it is. The influence which it has, seems plainly owing to its being constant and habitual, which it cannot but be, and not to the degree or strength of it. Every caprice of the imagination, every curiosity of the understanding, every affection of the heart, is perpetually showing its weakness, by prevailing over it. Men daily, hourly sacrifice the greatest known interest, to fancy, inquisitiveness, love or hatred, any vagrant inclination. The thing to be lamented is, not that men have so great regard to their own good or interest in the present world, for they have not enough;[11] but that they have so little to the good of others. And this seems plainly owing to their being so much engaged in the gratification of particular passions unfriendly to benevolence, and which happen to be most prevalent in them, much more than to self-love. As a proof of this may be observed, that there is no character more void of friendship, gratitude, natural affection, love to their country, common justice, or more equally and uniformly hard-hearted, than the abandoned in what is called the way of pleasure—hard-hearted and totally without feeling in behalf of others; except when they cannot escape the sight of distress, and so are interrupted by it in their pleasures. And yet it is ridiculous to call such an abandoned

[11] P. 369, etc.

course of pleasure interested, when the person engaged in it knows beforehand, and goes on under the feeling and apprehension that it will be as ruinous to himself as to those who depend upon him.

Upon the whole, if the generality of mankind were to cultivate within themselves the principle of self-love; if they were to accustom themselves often to sit down and consider what was the greatest happiness they were capable of attaining for themselves in this life, and if self-love were so strong and prevalent as that they would uniformly pursue this their supposed chief temporal good without being diverted from it by any particular passion, it would manifestly prevent numberless follies and vices. This was, in a great measure, the Epicurean system of philosophy. It is indeed by no means the religious, or even moral institution of life. Yet, with all the mistakes men would fall into about interest, it would be less mischievous than the extravagances of mere appetite, will and pleasure: for certainly self-love, though confined to the interest of this life, is of the two a much better guide than passion,[12] which has absolutely no bound nor measure but what is set to it by this self-love, or moral considerations.

From the distinction above made between self-love, and the several particular principles or affections in our nature, we may see how good ground there was for that assertion maintained by the several ancient schools of philosophy against the Epicureans, namely, that virtue is to be pursued as an end, eligible in and for itself. For, if there be any principles or affections in the mind of man distinct from self-love, that the things those principles tend towards, or the objects of those affections are, each of them in themselves eligible to be pursued upon its own account, and to be rested in as an end, is implied in the very idea of such principle or affection.[13] They, indeed, asserted much higher things of virtue, and with very good reason; but to say thus much of it, that it is to be pursued for itself, is to say no more of it than may truly be said of the object of every natural affection whatever.

[xiii. xiv.] The question which was a few years ago disputed

[12] P 390. [13] P. 500.

in France concerning the love of God, which was there called enthusiasm, as it will everywhere by the generality of the world; this question, I say, answers in religion to that old one in morals now mentioned. And both of them are, I think, fully determined by the same observation, namely, that the very nature of affection, the idea itself, necessarily implies resting in its object as an end.

I shall not here add anything further to what I have said in the two discourses upon that most important subject, but only this: that if we are constituted such sort of creatures, as from our very nature, to feel certain affections or movements of mind upon the sight or contemplation of the meanest inanimate part of the creation, for the flowers of the field have their beauty, certainly there must be somewhat due to Him himself, who is the Author and Cause of all things, who is more intimately present to us than anything else can be, and with whom we have a nearer and more constant intercourse than we can have with any creature. There must be some movements of mind and heart which correspond to his perfections, or of which those perfections are the natural object. And that when we are commanded to love the Lord our God, with all our heart, and with all our mind, and with all our soul; somewhat more must be meant than merely that we live in hope of rewards, or fear of punishments from Him; somewhat more than this must be intended: though these regards themselves are most just and reasonable, and absolutely necessary to be often recollected in such a world as this.

It may be proper just to advertise the reader, that he is not to look for any particular reason for the choice of the greatest part of these discourses; their being taken from amongst many others, preached in the same place, through a course of eight years, being in great measure accidental. Neither is he to expect to find any other connexion between them, than that uniformity of thought and design which will always be found in the writings of the same person when he writes with simplicity and in earnest.

Stanhope, September 16, 1729.

SERMON I.

UPON HUMAN NATURE.

[THERE are two ways of treating morals. One begins from the abstract relation of things, as in the systems of Cudworth and Clarke; the other begins with the nature of man. In these discourses the latter order is adopted, and the author intends to show in what sense virtue consists in following man's nature, and vice in deviating from it.

Man's nature, it must be carefully marked, includes two distinct things: the parts or elements of which it is composed, and the relation or connexion of those parts. The *first* sermon is devoted to the consideration of the "distinct parts of our internal frame." It is there shown that these parts are distinct; and not resolvable, as some have supposed, into one or more elements, as benevolence or self-love. The parts are also enumerated and classified. The *second* and *third* sermons discuss the relation between the several elements of our nature, proving the superiority, as a principle of action, of self-love over passion, and of conscience over both. From man's nature or constitution, as thus explained, it is shown that virtue is following nature; *i. e.*, it is obedience to the principles of action of which that nature is composed in due subjection to the laws which subsist among them.[1]

Sermon i. Human Nature—in its principles, private and social.
ii. Human Nature—in its constitution; or these principles in relation to each other: the supremacy of conscience.
iii. Human Nature, as thus explained, in relation to virtue.

[1] [This view of the connexion of the three sermons is important, and is taken partly from Butler's own preface, p. 340, which should be carefully read—and partly from the close of the third sermon. For a brief view of some doctrines which Butler quietly refutes, see Introductory Note to the "Dissertation on Virtue." "In these sermons," says Mackintosh, "Butler has taught truths more capable of being exactly distinguished from the doctrines of his predecessors, more satisfactorily established, more comprehensively applied to particulars, more rationally connected with each other, and, therefore, more worthy of the name of discovery, than any with which we are acquainted."]

A Original reference of the text: each member of the body of Christ connected with the rest for the good of the whole.

B Applying this principle, there are tendencies in man to his own good, and tendencies to the good of society: distinct in themselves, though coincident in their results.

1 There is in man a natural principle of benevolence, which is to society what self-love is to the individual.

a Proofs: friendship, compassion, parental love.

b These coincide in their results, and each requires the exercise of the other, a fresh proof that we are made for both.

(Note on Hobbes' account of benevolence, that (1) It is love of power. (2) Origin of this theory, and unsatisfactoriness of it. (3) Cases in which benevolence cannot be love of power. (4) If true, cruelty, when displaying more power than kindness, is more benevolent. (5) A question of fact, and proved by facts. (6) Whence it appears that benevolence is as independent a thing as resentment, though needing cultivation.)

2 There are in man other affections contributing to public and private good.

a They may be classified thus: Passions distinct from benevolence tending to public good; passions distinct from self-love tending to private good.

(Note, on the distinction between self-love and other affections. They differ in themselves, though sometimes using the same means of gratification.

1 Difference where the same means are used; hunger, shame.

2 Difference where the same means are not used.

Note on this classification.

Hunger and desire of esteem: the former not self-love; the latter not benevolence.)

b Social affections have respect to others, though tending also to individual good.

c. The public good is not necessarily contemplated in each act by men themselves.

d Conclusion.

3 There is in man a conscience or reflex sense, whereby we survey ourselves and pass sentence on our acts.

a Its tendency to the good of society.

b Shown to differ from affection.

c Proved to exist.

d Not intended to compare its relation to public and private good, but to note that it tends to both, especially the former.

Conclusion from these three-fold facts: men are made for society, as well as for themselves, whence may be drawn a new picture of human nature and of the relations of men. Nationalities, etc., spring from their nature more than from other causes.

Obj. There are in man tendencies mischievous to society: answer.

a So are there tendencies mischievous to himself; so that if the good of others is not part of our nature, neither is self-love.

b But these are good tendencies abused.

Note on envy and emulation. They differ not in their *end*, which is equality and superiority, but in their *means*. The end good; the means, in the case of envy, bad.

c There are exceptions to the rule in both cases.

Some have no affection for others; some, none for themselves. Ex.

Summary. Men are led by their nature to seek the happiness of themselves and also of others, though it must be noted (a) that men fulfil those duties imperfectly, and (b) often violate their nature in both respects.]

ROMANS xii. 4, 5.

For as we have many members in one body, and all members have not the same office: so we, being many, are one body in Christ, and every one members one of another.

THE epistles in the New Testament have all of them a particular reference to the condition and usages of the Christian world at the time they were written. Therefore, as they cannot be thoroughly understood, unless that condition and those usages are known and attended to; so further, though they be known, yet if they be discontinued or changed, exhortations, precepts, and illustrations of things, which refer to such circumstances now ceased or altered, cannot at this time be urged in that manner, and with that force which they were to the primitive Christians. Thus the text now before us, in its first intent and design, relates to the decent management of those extraordinary gifts which were then in the church,[a] but which are now totally ceased. And even as to the allusion that we are one body in Christ, though what the apostle here intends is equally true of Christians in all circumstances, and the consideration of it is plainly still an additional motive, over and above moral considera- 4

[a] 1 Cor. xii.

tions, to the discharge of the several duties and offices of a Christian; yet it is manifest this allusion must have appeared with much greater force to those, who by the many difficulties they went through for the sake of their religion, were led to keep always in view the relation they stood in to their Saviour, who had undergone the same; to those who from the idolatries of all around them, and their ill treatment, were taught to consider themselves as not of the world in which they lived, but as a distinct society of themselves, with laws, and ends, and principles of life and action, quite contrary to those which the world professed themselves at that time influenced by. Hence the relation of a Christian was by them considered as nearer than that of affinity and blood, and they almost literally esteemed themselves as members one of another.

It cannot, indeed, possibly be denied, that our being God's creatures, and virtue being the natural law we are born under, and the whole constitution of man being plainly adapted to it, are prior obligations to piety and virtue, than the consideration that God sent his Son into the world to save it, and the motives which arise from the peculiar relation of Christians, as members one of another under Christ our head. However, though all this be allowed, as it expressly is by the inspired writers, yet it is manifest that Christians at the time of the Revelation, and immediately after,[a] could not but insist mostly upon considerations of this latter kind.

[a] [The remark of Butler—that the first Christians did insist more on our relation to Christ as a motive to holiness, than upon our natural relation to God, or upon our moral nature generally—is quite just. But the reasons which Butler suggests—that they did so, because Christ had recently appeared—is without foundation. The true reason is that redemption, and the facts connected with it, establish *for all time* a ground of moral obligation firmer than any other. The new relations thus disclosed give an impulse to our feelings, of which natural religion must from necessity be destitute. And these relations with the influence of them are as impressive now as they were in the first ages of the church. The cross is still "the *power* of God" to all who believe, and under its influence men still judge that they are to live not to themselves, but "to him that died for them and rose again."]

These observations show the original particular reference of the text, and the peculiar force with which the thing intended by the allusion in it must have been felt by the primitive Christian world. They likewise afford a reason for treating it at this time in a more general way.

The relation which the several parts or members of the natural body have to each other and to the whole body, is here compared to the relation which each particular person in society has to other particular persons and to the whole society: and the latter is intended to be illustrated by the former. And if there be a likeness between these two relations, the consequence is obvious: that the latter shows us we were intended to do good to others, as the former shows us that the several members of the natural body were intended to be instruments of good to each other and to the whole body. But as there is scarce any ground for a comparison between society and the mere material body, this without the mind being a dead unactive thing; much less can the comparison be carried to any length. And since the apostle speaks of the several members as having distinct offices which implies the mind, it cannot be thought an unallowable liberty, instead of the body and its members, to substitute the whole nature of man, and all the variety of internal principles which belong to it. And then the comparison will be between the nature of man as respecting self, and tending to private good, his own preservation and happiness; and the nature of man as having respect to society, and tending to promote public good, the happiness of that society. These ends do, indeed, perfectly coincide; and to aim at public and private good are so far from being inconsistent, that they mutually promote each other: yet in the following discourse they must be considered as entirely distinct, otherwise the nature of man as tending to one, or as tending to the other, cannot be compared. There can no comparison be made, without considering the things compared as distinct and different.

From this review and comparison of the nature of man as respecting self, and as respecting society, it will plainly appear, that there are as real and the same kind of indications in human nature, that we were made for society and to do good to our fellow-creatures, as that we were intended

to take care of our own life, and health, and private good; and that the same objections lie against one of these assertions as against the other. For

First, There is a natural principle of benevolence[4] in man, which is in some degree to society what self-love is to the

[4] Suppose a man of learning to be writing a grave book upon human nature, and to show in several parts of it that he had an insight into the subject he was considering; amongst other things, the following one would require to be accounted for; the appearance of benevolence or good will in men towards each other in the instances of natural relation, and in others. Cautious of being deceived with outward show, he retires within himself to see exactly what that is in the mind of man from whence this appearance proceeds; and upon deep reflection, asserts the principle in the mind to be only the love of power, and delight in the exercise of it. Would not every body think here was a mistake of one word for another? That the philosopher was contemplating and accounting for some other human actions, some other behaviour of man to man? and could any one be thoroughly satisfied, that what is commonly called benevolence or good-will was really the affection meant, but only by being made to understand that this learned person had a general hypothesis, to which the appearance of good-will could no otherwise be reconciled? that what has this appearance is often nothing but ambition; that delight in superiority often (suppose always) mixes itself with benevolence, only makes it more specious to call it ambition than hunger, of the two: but in reality that passion does no more account for the whole appearances of good-will, than this appetite does. Is there not often the appearance of one man's wishing that good to another, which he knows himself unable to procure him; and rejoicing in it, though bestowed by a third person? And can love of power any way possibly come in to account for this desire or delight? Is there not often the appearance of men's distinguishing between two or more persons, preferring one before another to do good to, in cases where love of power cannot in the least account for the distinction and preference? For this principle can no otherwise distinguish between objects, than as it is a greater instance and exertion of power to do good to one rather than to another. Again, suppose goodwill in the mind of man to be nothing but delight in the exercise of power: men might indeed be restrained by distant and accidental considerations; but these restraints being removed, they would have a disposition to, and delight in mischief as an exercise and proof of power: and this disposition and delight would arise from or be the same principle in the mind,

And if there be in mankind any disposition to if there be any such thing as compassion, for is momentary love; if there be any such thing :nal or filial affections; if there be any affection ıture, the object and end of which is the good of ıis is itself benevolence, or the love of another. so short, be it ever so low a degree, or ever so :onfined, it proves the assertion, and points out ıre designed for, as really as though it were in a ce and more extensive. I must, however, remind

ın to and delight in charity. Thus cruelty, as distinct d resentment, would be exactly the same in the mind od-will: that one tends to the happiness, the other to our fellow-creatures, is, it seems, merely an accidental , which the mind has not the least regard to. These dities which even men of capacity run into, when they to belie their nature, and will perversely disclaim that which was originally stamped upon it; the traces of 'er faint, are plainly discernible upon the mind of man. :uman Nature, c. 9. § 17.

ou can in earnest doubt, whether there be such a thing n one man towards another; (for the question is not ther the degree or extensiveness of it, but concerning itself;) let it be observed, that whether man be thus, :onstituted, what is the inward frame in this particular stion of fact or natural history, not provable imme- ıson. It is therefore to be judged of and determined, way other facts or matters of natural history are; to the external senses, or inward perceptions, respec- matter under consideration is cognizable by one or y arguing from acknowledged facts and actions; for a of actions of the same kind, in different circumstances, ıg different objects, will prove to a certainty, what y do not, and, to the greatest probability, what prin- › proceed from: and lastly, by the testimony of man- hat there is some degree of benevolence amongst men, ongly and plainly proved in all these ways, as it could :oved, supposing there was this affection in our nature. ny one think fit to assert, that resentment in the mind ›solutely nothing but reasonable concern for our own ılsity of this, and what is the real nature of that pas- › shown in no other ways than those in which it may

you, that though benevolence and self-love are different; though the former tends most directly to public good, and the latter to private: yet they are so perfectly coincident, that the greatest satisfaction to ourselves depends upon our having benevolence in a due degree; and that self-love is one chief security of our right behaviour towards society. It may be added, that their mutual coinciding, so that we can scarce promote one without the other, is equally a proof that we were made for both.

2 Secondly, This will further appear from observing that the several passions and affections, which are distinct[5] both

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be shown, that there is such a thing in some degree as real good-will in man towards man. It is sufficient that the seeds of it be implanted in our nature by God. There is, it is owned, much left for us to do upon our own heart and temper; to cultivate, to improve, to call it forth, to exercise it in a steady, uniform manner. This is our work: this is virtue and religion.

[5] Every body makes a distinction between self-love, and the several particular passions, appetites, and affections; and yet they are often confounded again. That they are totally different will be seen by any one who will distinguish between the passions and appetites themselves, and endeavouring after the means of their gratification. Consider the appetite of hunger, and the desire of esteem: these being the occasion both of pleasure and pain, the coolest self-love, as well as the appetites and passions themselves, may put us upon making use of the proper method of obtaining that pleasure, and avoiding that pain; but the feelings themselves, the pain of hunger and shame, and the delight from esteem, are no more self-love, than they are anything in the world. Though a man hated himself, he would as much feel the pain of hunger as he would that of the gout; and it is plainly supposable there may be creatures with self-love in them to the highest degree, who may be quite insensible and indifferent (as men in some cases are) to the contempt and esteem of those, upon whom their happiness does not in some further respects depend. And as self-love and the several particular passions and appetites are in themselves totally different; so, that some actions proceed from one, and some from the other, will be manifest to any who will observe the two following very supposable cases. One man rushes upon certain ruin for the gratification of a present desire: nobody will call the principle of this action self-love. Suppose another man to go through some laborious work upon promise of a great reward, without any distinct knowledge

from benevolence and self-love, do in general contribute and lead us to public good, as really as to private. It might be thought too minute and particular, and would carry us too great a length, to distinguish between and compare together the several passions or appetites distinct from benevolence, whose primary use and intention is the security and good of society; and the passions distinct from self-love, whose primary intention and design is the security and good of the individual.[6] It is enough to the present argument, that

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what the reward will be: this course of action cannot be ascribed to any particular passion. The former of these actions is plainly to be imputed to some particular passion or affection, the latter as plainly to the general affection or principle of self-love. That there are some particular pursuits or actions concerning which we cannot determine how far they are owing to one, and how far to the other, proceeds from this, that the two principles are frequently mixed together, and run up into each other. This distinction is further explained in the eleventh sermon.

[6] If any desire to see this distinction and comparison made in a particular instance, the appetite and passion now mentioned may serve for one. Hunger is to be considered as a private appetite; because the end for which it was given us is the preservation of the individual. Desire of esteem is a public passion; because the end for which it was given us is to regulate our behaviour towards society. The respect which this has to private good is as remote as the respect that has to public good: and the appetite is no more self-love, than the passion is benevolence. The object and end of the former is merely food; the object and end of the latter is merely esteem: but the latter can no more be gratified, without contributing to the good of society, than the former can be gratified without contributing to the preservation of the individual. [The passions to which Butler here alludes, have been classified thus:—1. Appetites or bodily desires, originating in our wants, natural or artificial, and having for their object, *things*. 2. Affection—as love, hatred, benevolence, etc., terms loosely applied to things, but properly applicable to *persons*. 3. Mental desires—love of knowledge, of safety, etc., having for their object *abstractions*. 4. Moral sentiments—indignation, approval, resentment, having for their object, *actions* regarded in their *moral qualities*. 5. Reflex sentiments—the desire of esteem, of our own approval (the idea included in conscience), etc. These sentiments have for their objects the *thoughts* of others, or our own in relation to *ourselves*: 'Whewell's Elements

b desire of esteem from others, contempt and esteem of them, love of society as distinct from affection to the good of it, indignation against successful vice, that these are public affections or passions; have an immediate respect to others, naturally lead us to regulate our behaviour in such a manner as will be of service to our fellow-creatures. If any or all of these may be considered likewise as private affections, as tending to private good; this does not hinder them from being public affections too, or destroy the good influence of them upon society, and their tendency to public good. It
c may be added, that as persons without any conviction from reason of the desirableness of life, would yet of course preserve it merely from the appetite of hunger; so by acting merely from regard (suppose) to reputation, without any consideration of the good of others, men often contribute to public good. In both these instances they are plainly instruments in the hands of another, in the hands of Providence, to carry on ends, the preservation of the individual and good of society, which they themselves have not in their view or
d intention. The sum is, men have various appetites, passions, and particular affections, quite distinct both from self-love and from benevolence: all of these have a tendency to promote both public and private good, and may be considered as respecting others and ourselves equally and in common; but some of them seem most immediately to respect others, or tend to public good; others of them most immediately to respect self, or tend to private good. As the former are not benevolence, so the latter are not self-love: neither sort are instances of our love either to ourselves or others; but only instances of our Maker's care and love both of the individual and the species, and proofs that he intended we should be

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of Morality,' chap. ii. The classification of Stewart gives greater prominence to self-love, and to other parts of our nature (as sympathy), which co-operate with the moral sense in influencing the conduct: 'Outlines,' p. 80–162. Of late, self-love has been regarded as a principle of secondary formation, the result of reason or habit, controlling the gratification of particular desires: 'Mackintosh,' p. 196; 'Wayland,' p. 106. Butler, wisely for his purpose, avoids these questions. The reality of the distinction between different principles of action is all that is needed for his argument.]

instruments of good to each other, as well as that we should be so to ourselves.

Thirdly, There is a principle of reflection in men, by which 3
they distinguish between, approve and disapprove their own actions. We are plainly constituted such sort of creatures as to reflect upon our own nature. The mind can take a view of what passes within itself, its propensions, aversions, passions, affections, as respecting such objects, and in such degrees; and of the several actions consequent thereupon. In this survey it approves of one, disapproves of another, and towards a third is affected in neither of these ways, but is quite indifferent. This principle in man, by which he approves or disapproves his heart, temper, and actions, is conscience; for this is the strict sense of the word, though sometimes it is used so as to take in more. And that this faculty tends to restrain men from doing mischief to each a
other, and leads them to do good, is too manifest to need being insisted upon. Thus a parent has the affection of love to his children: this leads him to take care of, to educate, to make due provision for them; the natural affection leads to this: but the reflection that it is his proper business, what belongs to him, that it is right and commendable so to do; this added to the affection, becomes a much more settled principle, and carries him on through more labour and difficulties for the sake of his children, than he would undergo from that affection alone; if he thought it, and the course of action it led to, either indifferent or criminal. This, indeed, b
is impossible, to do that which is good and not to approve of it; for which reason they are frequently not considered as distinct, though they really are: for men often approve of the actions of others, which they will not imitate, and likewise do that which they approve not. It cannot possibly c
be denied that there is this principle of reflection or conscience in human nature. Suppose a man to relieve an innocent person in great distress; suppose the same man afterwards, in the fury of anger, to do the greatest mischief to a person who had given no just cause of offence; to aggravate the injury, add the circumstances of former friendship and obligation from the injured person; let the man who is supposed to have done these two different actions, coolly reflect upon them afterwards, without regard to their con-

sequences to himself: to assert that any common man would be affected in the same way towards these different actions, that he would make no distinction between them, but approve or disapprove them equally, is too glaring a falsity to need being confuted. There is, therefore, this principle of reflection or conscience in mankind. It is needless to compare the respect it has to private good, with the respect it has to public; since it plainly tends as much to the latter as to the former, and is commonly thought to tend chiefly to the latter. This faculty is now mentioned merely as another part in the inward frame of man, pointing out to us in some degree what we are intended for, and as what will naturally and of course have some influence. The particular place assigned to it by Nature, what authority it has, and how great influence it ought to have, shall be hereafter considered.

From this comparison of benevolence and self-love, of our public and private affections, of the courses of life they lead to, and of the principle of reflection or conscience as respecting each of them, it is as manifest that we were made for society, and to promote the happiness of it; as that we were intended to take care of our own life, and health, and private good.[7]

[7] [Butler labours to establish the fact that there are different principles in human nature, and that these principles are not all selfish, any more than all benevolent, in order to meet two classes of opponents, as well as to establish his own argument. The Epicureans held, with some moderns, that all the motive powers of man's nature are resolvable into selfishness in its grosser or more refined forms. Other sects, again, hold that they are resolvable into some other *single* principle; sympathy, or association, or benevolence. The first of these theories is the most degrading; but all are liable to the same objection. They are, in fact, not true; and they oppose, with equal force, the fundamental principle of Butler's system. The summary of Mackintosh is instructive. "Mankind have various principles of action: some leading to the good of the individual, some to the good of the community. But the former are not instances of self-love; for self-love has the desire of a man's own happiness as its object, whereas the object of an appetite or passion is some outward thing. Self-love seeks things as means of happiness; the private appetites seek things, not as means, but as ends. . . . . The satisfaction of these appetites

And from this whole review must be given a different draught of human nature from what we are often presented with. Mankind are by nature so closely united, there is such a correspondence between the inward sensations of one man and those of another, that disgrace is as much avoided as bodily pain, and to be the object of esteem and love as much desired as any external goods: and in many particular cases, persons are carried on to do good to others, as the end their affection tends to and rests in; and manifest that they find real satisfaction and enjoyment in this course of behaviour. There is such a natural principle of attraction in man towards man, that having trod the same tract of land, having breathed in the same climate, barely having been born in the same artificial district or division, becomes the occasion of contracting acquaintances and familiarities many years after: for anything may serve the purpose. Thus relations merely nominal are sought and invented, not by governors, but by the lowest of the people, which are found sufficient to hold mankind together in little fraternities and copartnerships: weak ties, indeed, and what may afford fund enough for ridicule, if they are absurdly considered as the real principles of that union; but they are in truth merely the occasions, as anything may be of anything, upon which our nature carries us on according to its own previous bent and bias, which occasions, therefore, would be nothing at all, were there not this prior disposition and bias of nature. Men are so much one body, that in a peculiar manner they feel for each other, shame, sudden danger, resentment, honour, prosperity, distress; one or another, or

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and passions in the man, compose what is called a man's interest. . . . . But besides private or public desires, and besides the calm regard to our own general welfare, there is a principle in man in its nature supreme over all others. . . . His self-love is superior to his private passions, and conscience is superior to the whole man. Passion implies nothing but inclination to follow an object, and in that respect, passions differ only in force. . . . . But no notion can be formed of conscience which does not comprehend direction and authority over all the other principles of our nature." See also 'Chalmers' Bridgewater Treatise,' p. 40.]

all of these, from the social nature in general, from benevolence, upon the occasion of natural relation, acquaintance, protection, dependence; each of these being distinct cements of society. And, therefore, to have no restraint from, no regard to others in our behaviour, is the speculative absurdity of considering ourselves as single and independent, as having nothing in our nature which has respect to our fellow-creatures, reduced to action and practice. And this is the same absurdity, as to suppose a hand, or any part to have no natural respect to any other, or to the whole body.[a]

Obj. But allowing all this, it may be asked, "Has not man dispositions and principles within which lead him to do evil to others, as well as to do good? Whence come the many miseries else, which men are the authors and instruments of to each other?" These questions, so far as they relate to the foregoing discourse, may be answered by asking, Has not man also dispositions and principles within, which lead him to do evil to himself as well as good? Whence come the many miseries else, sickness, pain and death, which men are the instruments and authors of to themselves?

It may be thought more easy to answer one of these questions than the other, but the answer to both is really the same; that mankind have ungoverned passions which they will gratify at any rate, as well to the injury of others as in contradiction to known private interest: but that as there is no such thing as self-hatred, so neither is there any such thing as ill will in one man towards another, emulation and resentment being away; whereas there is plainly benevolence or good will. There is no such thing as love of injustice, oppression, treachery, ingratitude; but only eager desires after such and such external goods, which, according to a very ancient observation, the most abandoned would choose to obtain by innocent means, if they were as easy and as effectual to their end. That even emulation and resentment,

[a] [These statements of Butler on sympathy, are guarded and just. Adam Smith further explained and applied this principle, and made it the foundation and substance of his system. What in Butler is the companion of benevolence, and our sense of morality, is, in Smith, the essence of nearly all emotion, and of conscience itself.—See his '*Theory of Moral Sentiments*.']

by any one who will consider what these passions really are in nature,[9] will be found nothing to the purpose of this objection: and that the principles and passions in the mind of man, which are distinct both from self-love and benevolence, primarily and most directly lead to right behaviour with regard to others as well as himself, and only secondarily and accidentally to what is evil. Thus, though men to avoid the shame of one villany are sometimes guilty of a greater, yet it is easy to see that the original tendency of shame is to prevent the doing of shameful actions; and its leading men to conceal such actions when done, is only in consequence of their being done, *i. e.*, of the passions not having answered its first end.

If it be said, that there are persons in the world, who are in great measure without the natural affections towards their fellow-creatures: there are likewise instances of persons without the common natural affections to themselves; but the nature of man is not to be judged of by either of these, but by what appears in the common world, in the bulk of mankind.

I am afraid it would be thought very strange, if to confirm the truth of this account of human nature, and make out the justness of the foregoing comparison, it should be added, that from what appears, men in fact as much and as often contradict that part of their nature which respects self, and which leads them to their own private good and happiness, as they contradict that part of it which respects society, and tends to public good. That there are as few persons who

[9] Emulation is merely the desire and hope of equality with or superiority over others, with whom we compare ourselves. There does not appear to be any other grief in the natural passion, but only that want which is implied in desire. However this may be so strong as to be the occasion of great grief. To desire the attainment of this equality or superiority by the particular means of others being brought down to our own level, or below it, is I think, the distinct notion of envy. From whence, it is easy to see, that the real end, which the natural passion, emulation, and which the unlawful one, envy, aims at, is exactly the same; namely, that equality or superiority: and consequently, that to do mischief is not the end of envy, but merely the means it makes use of to attain its end. As to resentment, see the eighth sermon.

attain the greatest satisfaction and enjoyment which they might attain in the present world, as who do the greatest good to others which they might do: nay, that there are as few who can be said really and in earnest to aim at one as at the other. Take a survey of mankind: the world in general, the good and bad, almost without exception, equally are agreed, that were religion out of the case, the happiness of the present life would consist in a manner wholly in riches, honours, sensual gratifications; insomuch that one scarce hears a reflection made upon prudence, life, conduct, but upon this supposition. Yet on the contrary, that persons in the greatest affluence of fortune are no happier than such as have only a competency; that the cares and disappointments of ambition for the most part far exceed the satisfactions of it; as also the miserable intervals of intemperance and excess, and the many untimely deaths occasioned by a dissolute course of life. These things are all seen, acknowledged, by every one acknowledged; but are thought no objections against, though they expressly contradict this universal principle, that the happiness of the present life consists in one or other of them. Whence is all this absurdity and contradiction? Is not the middle way obvious? Can anything be more manifest, than that the happiness of life consists in these possessed and enjoyed only to a certain degree; that to pursue them beyond this degree, is always attended with more inconvenience than advantage to a man's self, and often with extreme misery and unhappiness. Whence then, I say, is all this absurdity and contradiction? Is it really the result of consideration in mankind, how they may become most easy to themselves, most free from care, and enjoy the chief happiness attainable in this world? Or is it not manifestly owing either to this, that they have not cool and reasonable concern enough for themselves to consider wherein their chief happiness in the present life consists; or else, if they do consider it, that they will not act conformably to what is the result of that consideration, *i. e.*, reasonable concern for themselves, or cool self-love is prevailed over by passion and appetite. So that from what appears, there is no ground to assert that those principles in the nature of man, which most directly lead to promote the good of our fellow-creatures, are more generally or in a greater

degree violated, than those which most directly lead us to promote our own private good and happiness.

The sum of the whole is plainly this. The nature of man considered in his single capacity, and with respect only to the present world, is adapted and leads him to attain the greatest happiness he can for himself in the present world. The nature of man considered in his public or social capacity leads him to a right behaviour in society, to that course of life which we call virtue. Men follow or obey their nature in both these capacities and respects to a certain degree, but not entirely: their actions do not come up to the whole of what their nature leads them to in either of these capacities or respects: and they often violate their nature in both, *i. e.*, as they neglect the duties they owe to their fellow-creatures to which their nature leads them, and are injurious, to which their nature is abhorrent; so there is a manifest negligence in men of their real happiness or interest in the present world, when that interest is inconsistent with a present gratification, for the sake of which they negligently, nay, even knowingly, are the authors and instruments of their own misery and ruin. Thus they are as often unjust to themselves as to others, and for the most part are equally so to both by the same actions. *Summ* a b

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SERMONS II., III.

UPON HUMAN NATURE.

1 [Morality, or the course God intends men to take, may be known from our nature.
  a Moral obligation admits this kind of proof.
  b Man's nature may be known, and so God's intention, though with some difficulty.
  c Such reasoning is as just, as that from our physical constitution.
  d The elements of our nature have been already ascertained, and so morality may be defined.

2 But herein, it is objected, there can be no law. 'Nature means passion, emotion, reflection, yet these differ in different men: it is their 'nature,' therefore, to follow the strongest. So that vice and morality, the violation of rules and the observance of them, are alike natural; answer,
  Ancient writers and Scripture concur nevertheless in affirm-

ing a 'natural law,' and in describing vice as deviation from that law.

b Nature, moreover, has different meanings;

1 It means any principle in man, whatever its kind or degree, as anger, benevolence. This cannot be the meaning here, for in this sense anger is both 'natural' and unnatural.

2 It means any principle that is strongest: pride is the nature of a proud man. This meaning must be rejected: for in this sense, vice is often following nature.

3 It means a good law, not identical with feeling, though it is said to be written on the heart.

3 This law of nature is conscience, with the prerogative of supremacy over other principles.

a Some such supremacy shown from what is *unnatural*; following desires like brutes.

b Some such supremacy shown from what is natural, making passion subservient to self-love; whence one principle is clearly superior to another.

c Such supremacy part of the idea of conscience; not in fact, perhaps (power), but at least of right (authority):

d Hence it has not only some place in our nature, but the first; passion and interest may rebel; still *its* authority and rights are sacred.

e If this be questioned, suppose that conscience has no supremacy, then nothing done in accordance with natural feeling or passion is unnatural or wrong. Parricide and filial obedience, being both expressions of emotion, are equally approved.

4 The constitution of human nature, thus explained, gives rules of virtue, and creates an obligation to obey them.

a A constitution implies not only parts, but parts in their connexion and dependency.

b A constitution is violated, not only by removing parts but by giving to the lower the supremacy; hence the saying that injustice is contrary to nature.

(Note on the meaning of 'a constitution.'

1 Constitution defined, in relation to man especially.

2 Its nature illustrated.

3 Constitution conceived of as perfect when virtuous; though actually imperfect).

c Whence man, having in his make parts lower and supreme, is a law to himself.

d The law thus defined has the two most important qualities of law:

1 It is easily applied, and

2 It brings with it its own obligation.
5 Against this law it is objected—
a It teaches us to regard others, and places us under restraints: better be free, and seek only our own good. Answer—
1 You cannot disregard others and secure your own good.
2 Nor can you gain anything without restraints of some kind
b To which it is objected again—
Then we are it seems to seek happiness, and so far to regard others and practice restraints, as these restraints bring greater convenience: hence
We agree, and our own happiness is, after all, it seems, the measure and end of virtue.
Yes, only note,
1 That not vice, but virtue, secures happiness.
2 That vice, not virtue, has most restraints, especially when virtue becomes habitual.
However,
3 Duty and interest (*i. e.* happiness) really coincide; generally even here, and certainly in the end.
Conscience and enlightened self-love therefore lead the same way, though of the two the former is supreme.
Summary.

Romans ii. 14.

For when the Gentiles, which have not the law, do by nature the things contained in the law, these, having not the law, are a law unto themselves.

As speculative truth admits of different kinds of proof, so 1
likewise moral obligations may be shown by different methods. a
If the real nature of any creature leads him and is adapted to such and such purposes only, or more than to any other; this is a reason to believe the Author of that nature intended it for those purposes. Thus there is no doubt the eye was intended for us to see with. And the more complex any constitution is, and the greater variety of parts there are which thus tend to some one end, the stronger is the proof
that such end was designed. However, when the inward b
frame of man is considered as any guide in morals, the utmost caution must be used that none make peculiarities in their own temper, or anything which is the effect of particular customs, though observable in several, the standard of what is common to the species: and above all, that the

highest principle be not forgot or excluded, that to which belongs the adjustment and correction of all other inward movements and affections, which principle will, of course, have some influence, but which being in nature supreme, as shall now be shown, ought to preside over and govern all the rest. The difficulty of rightly observing the two former cautions; the appearance there is of some small diversity amongst mankind with respect to this faculty, with respect to their natural sense of moral good and evil; and the attention necessary to survey with any exactness what passes within, have occasioned that it is not so much agreed what is the standard of the internal nature of man, as of his external form. Neither is this last exactly settled. Yet we understand one another when we speak of the shape of a human body. So likewise we do when we speak of the heart and inward principles, how far soever the standard is from being exact or precisely fixed. There is, therefore, ground for an attempt of showing men to themselves, of showing them what course of life and behaviour their real nature points out and would lead them to. Now obligations of virtue shown, and motives to the practice of it enforced, from a review of the nature of man, are to be considered as an appeal to each particular person's heart and natural conscience; as the external senses are appealed to for the proof of things cognizable by them. Since then our inward feelings, and the perceptions we receive from our external senses are equally real; to argue from the former to life and conduct, is as little liable to exception, as to argue from the latter to absolute speculative truth. A man can as little doubt whether his eyes were given him to see with, as he can doubt of the truth of the science of optics deduced from ocular experiments. And allowing the inward feeling, shame; a man can as little doubt whether it was given him to prevent his doing shameful actions, as he can doubt whether his eyes were given him to guide his steps. And as to these inward feelings themselves, that they are real, that man has in his nature passions and affections, can no more be questioned, than that he has external senses. Neither can the former be wholly mistaken, though to a certain degree liable to greater mistakes than the latter.

There can be no doubt but that several propensions or

instincts, several principles in the heart of man, carry him to society, and to contribute to the happiness of it, in a sense and a manner in which no inward principle leads him to evil. These principles, propensions, or instincts, which lead him to do good, are approved of by a certain faculty within, quite distinct from these propensions themselves. All this hath been fully made out in the foregoing discourse.

2 But it may be said, "What is all this, though true, to the purpose of virtue and religion? These require, not only that we do good to others when we are led this way, by benevolence or reflection, happening to be stronger than other principles, passions, or appetites; but likewise that the whole character be formed upon thought and reflection, that every action be directed by some determinate rule, some other rule than the strength and prevalency of any principle or passion. What sign is there in our nature (for the inquiry is only about what is to be collected from thence) that this was intended by its author? Or how does so various and fickle a temper as that of man appear adapted thereto? It may indeed be absurd and unnatural for men to act without any reflection; nay, without regard to that particular kind of reflection which you call conscience, because this does belong to our nature. For as there never was a man but who approved one place, prospect, building, before another; so it does not appear that there ever was a man who would not have approved an action of humanity rather than of cruelty, interest and passion being quite out of the case. But interest and passion do come in, and are often too strong for and prevail over reflection and conscience. Now as brutes have various instincts by which they are carried on to the end the Author of their nature intended them for, is not man in the same condition, with this difference only, that to his instincts (*i. e.*, appetites and passions) is added the principle of reflection or conscience? And as brutes act agreeably to their nature, in following that principle or particular instinct which for the present is strongest in them, does not man likewise act agreeably to his nature, or obey the law of his creation, by following that principle, be it passion or conscience, which for the present happens to be strongest in him? Thus different men are by their particular nature hurried on to pursue honour, or riches, or pleasure

There are also persons whose temper leads them in an uncommon degree to kindness, compassion, doing good to their fellow-creatures; as there are others who are given to suspend their judgment, to weigh and consider things, and to act upon thought and reflection. Let every one then quietly follow his nature, as passion, reflection, appetite, the several parts of it, happen to be strongest; but let not the man of virtue take upon him to blame the ambitious, the covetous, the dissolute, since these equally with him obey and follow their nature. Thus, as in some cases we follow our nature in doing the works contained in the law, so in other cases we follow nature in doing contrary."

Now all this licentious talk entirely goes upon a supposition, that men follow their nature in the same sense, in violating the known rules of justice and honesty for the sake of a present gratification, as they do in following those rules when they have no temptation to the contrary. And if this were true, that could not be so which St. Paul asserts, that men are by nature a law to themselves. If by following nature were meant only acting as we please, it would indeed be ridiculous to speak of nature as any guide in morals: nay, the very mention of deviating from nature would be absurd; and the mention of following it, when spoken by way of distinction, would absolutely have no meaning. For did ever any one act otherwise than as he pleased? And yet the ancients speak of deviating from Nature as vice; and of following nature so much as a distinction, that according to them the perfection of virtue consists therein. So that language itself should teach people another sense to the words following nature, than barely acting as we please. Let it however be observed, that though the words human nature are to be explained, yet the real question of this discourse is not concerning the meaning of words, any otherwise than as the explanation of them may be needful to make out and explain the assertion, that every man is naturally a law to himself, that every one may find within himself the rule of right, and obligations to follow it. This St. Paul affirms in the words of the text, and this the foregoing objection really denies by seeming to allow it. And the objections will be fully answered, and the text before us explained, by observing that nature is considered in different views, and the

word used in different senses; and by showing in what view it is considered, and in what sense the word is used, when intended to express and signify that which is the guide of
life, that by which men are a law to themselves. I say, the b
explanation of the term will be sufficient, because from thence it will appear that, in some senses of the word, Nature cannot be, but that in another sense it manifestly is, a law to us.

I. By nature is often meant no more than some principle 1
in man, without regard either to the kind or degree of it. Thus the passion of anger, and the affection of parents to their children, would be called equally natural. And as the same person hath often contrary principles, which at the same time draw contrary ways, he may by the same action both follow and contradict his nature in this sense of the word; he may follow one passion and contradict another.

II. Nature is frequently spoken of as consisting in those 2
passions which are strongest, and most influence the actions; which being vicious ones, mankind is in this sense naturally vicious, or vicious by nature. Thus St. Paul says of the Gentiles, who were dead in trespasses and sins, and walked according to the spirit of disobedience, that they were by nature the children of wrath.[1] They could be no otherwise children of wrath by nature, than they were vicious by nature.

Here then are two different senses of the word nature, in neither of which men can at all be said to be a law to themselves. They are mentioned only to be excluded; to prevent their being confounded, as the latter is in the objection with another sense of it, which is now to be inquired after and explained.

III. The apostle asserts, that the Gentiles do by nature 3
the things contained in the law. Nature is indeed here put by way of distinction from revelation, but yet it is not a mere negative. He intends to express more than that by which they did not, that by which they did the works of the law, namely, by nature. It is plain the meaning of the word is not the same in this passage as in the former, where it is spoken of as evil; for in the latter it is spoken of as good, as

[1] Ephes. ii. 3.

that by which they acted, or might have acted virtuously What that is in man by which he is naturally a law to him self, is explained in the following words: which show the work of the law written in their hearts, their consciences also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another. If there be a distinction to be made between the works written in their hearts and the witness of conscience, by the former must be meant the natural disposition to kindness and compassion, to do what is of good report, to which this apostle often refers. That part of the nature of man treated of in the foregoing discourse, which with very little reflection and of course leads him to society, and by means of which he naturally acts a just and good part in it, unless other passions or interest lead him astray. Yet since other passions, and regards to private interest, which lead us (though indirectly, yet they lead us) astray, are themselves in a degree equally natural, and often most prevalent; and since we have no method of seeing the particular degrees in which one or the other is placed in us by nature, it is plain the former, considered merely as natural, good and right, as they are, can no more be a law to us than the latter. But there is a
8 superior principle of reflection or conscience in every man, which distinguishes between the internal principles of his heart, as well as his external actions; which passes judgment upon himself and them; pronounces determinately some actions to be in themselves just, right, good; others to be in themselves evil, wrong, unjust. Which, without being consulted, without being advised with, magisterially exerts itself, and approves or condemns him the doer of them accordingly. And which, if not forcibly stopped, naturally and always of course goes on to anticipate a higher and more effectual sentence, which shall hereafter second and affirm its own. But this part of the office of conscience is beyond my present design explicitly to consider. It is by this faculty, natural to man, that he is a moral agent, that he is a law to himself; but this faculty, I say, not to be considered merely as a principle in his heart, which is to have some influence as well as others; but considered as a faculty in kind and in nature supreme over all others, and which bears its own authority of being so.

This prerogative, this natural supremacy of the faculty which surveys, approves, or disapproves the several affections of our mind, and actions of our lives, being that by which men are a law to themselves, their conformity or disobedience to which law of our nature renders their actions in the highest and most proper sense, natural or unnatural, it is fit it be further explained to you. And I hope it will be so, if you will attend to the following reflections:—

Man may act according to that principle or inclination which for the present happens to be strongest, and yet act in a way disproportionate to, and violate his real proper nature. Suppose a brute creature by any bait to be allured into a snare, by which he is destroyed. He plainly followed the bent of his nature, leading him to gratify his appetite. There is an entire correspondence between his whole nature and such an action. Such action, therefore, is natural. But suppose a man, foreseeing the same danger of certain ruin, should rush into it for the sake of a present gratification. He, in this instance, would follow his strongest desire, as did the brute creature; but there would be as manifest a disproportion between the nature of a man and such an action, as between the meanest work of art and the skill of the greatest master in that art, which disproportion arises, not from considering the action singly in itself, or in its consequences, but from comparison of it with the nature of the agent. And since such an action is utterly disproportionate to the nature of man, it is in the strictest and most proper sense unnatural; this word expressing that disproportion. Therefore, instead of the words disproportionate to his nature, the word unnatural may now be put; this being more familiar to us. But let it be observed, that it stands for the same thing precisely.

Now what is it which renders such a rash action unnatural? Is it that he went against the principle of reasonable and cool self-love, considered merely as a part of his nature? No, for if he had acted the contrary way, he would equally have gone against a principle or part of his nature, namely, passion or appetite. But to deny a present appetite, from foresight that the gratification of it would end in immediate ruin or extreme misery, is by no means an unnatural action; whereas to contradict or go against cool self-love for the

sake of such gratification, is so in the instance before us. Such an action then being unnatural, and its being so not arising from a man's going against a principle or desire barely, nor in going against that principle or desire which happens for the present to be strongest, it necessarily follows that there must be some other difference or distinction to be made between these two principles, passion and cool self-love, than what I have yet taken notice of. And this difference, not being a difference in strength or degree, I call a difference in nature and in kind. And since, in the instance still before us, if passion prevails over self-love, the consequent action is unnatural; but if self-love prevails over passion, the action is natural. It is manifest that self-love is in human nature a superior principle to passion. This may be contradicted without violating that nature; but the former cannot. So that, if we will act conformably to the economy of man's nature, reasonable self-love must govern. Thus, without particular consideration of conscience, we may have a clear conception of the superior nature of one inward principle to another; and see that there really is this natural superiority, quite distinct from degrees of strength and prevalency.

Let us now take a view of the nature of man, as consisting partly of various appetites, passions, affections, and partly of the principle of reflection or conscience, leaving quite out all consideration of the different degrees of strength in which either of them prevail; and it will further appear that there is this natural superiority of one inward principle to another, and that it is even part of the idea of reflection or conscience.

Passion or appetite implies a direct simple tendency towards such and such objects, without distinction of the means by which they are to be obtained. Consequently it will often happen there will be a desire of particular objects, in cases where they cannot be obtained without manifest injury to others. Reflection or conscience comes in and disapproves the pursuit of them in these circumstances; but the desire remains. Which is to be obeyed, appetite or reflection? Cannot this question be answered from the economy and constitution of human nature merely, without saying which is strongest? Or need this at all come into

consideration? Would not the question be intelligibly and fully answered by saying, that the principle of reflection or conscience being compared with the various appetites, passions, and affections in men, the former is manifestly superior and chief, without regard to strength? And how often soever the latter happens to prevail, it is mere usurpation. The former remains in nature and in kind its superior; and every instance of such prevalence of the latter is an instance of breaking in upon and violation of the constitution of man.

All this is no more than the distinction which every body is acquainted with, between mere power and authority: only instead of being intended to express the difference between what is possible, and what is lawful in civil government; here it has been shown applicable to the several principles in the mind of man. Thus that principle, by which we survey, and either approve or disapprove our own heart, temper and actions, is not only to be considered as what is in its turn to have some influence; which may be said of every passion, of the lowest appetites: but likewise as being superior; as from its very nature manifestly claiming superiority over all others: insomuch that you cannot form a notion of this faculty, conscience, without taking in judgment, direction, superintendency. This is a constituent part of the idea, that is, of the faculty itself; and to preside and govern, from the very economy and constitution of man, belongs to it. Had it strength, as it has right; had it power, as it has manifest authority; it would absolutely govern the world.

This gives us a further view of the nature of man; shows us what course of life we were made for: not only that our real nature leads us to be influenced in some degree by reflection and conscience; but likewise in what degree we are to be influenced by it, if we will fall in with, and act agreeably to the constitution of our nature: that this faculty was placed within to be our proper governor; to direct and regulate all under principles, passions, and motives of action. This is its right and office: thus sacred is its authority. And how often soever men violate and rebelliously refuse to submit to it, for supposed interest which they cannot otherwise obtain, or for the sake of passion which they cannot

otherwise gratify; this makes no alteration as to the natural right and office of conscience.

Let us now turn this whole matter another way, and suppose there was no such thing at all as this natural supremacy of conscience; that there was no distinction to be made between one inward principle and another, but only that of strength; and see what would be the consequence.

Consider then, what is the latitude and compass of the actions of man with regard to himself, his fellow-creatures, and the Supreme Being? What are their bounds, besides that of our natural power? With respect to the first two, they are plainly no other than these: no man seeks misery as such for himself; and no one unprovoked does mischief to another for its own sake. For in every degree within these bounds, mankind knowingly from passion or wantonness bring ruin and misery upon themselves and others. And impiety and profaneness, I mean, what every one would call so who believes the being of God, have absolutely no bounds at all. Men blaspheme the Author of nature, formally and in words renounce their allegiance to their Creator. Put an instance then with respect to any one of these three. Though we should suppose profane swearing, and in general that kind of impiety now mentioned to mean nothing, yet it implies wanton disregard and irreverence towards an Infinite Being our Creator; and is this as suitable to the nature of man, as reverence and dutiful submission of heart towards that Almighty Being? Or suppose a man guilty of parricide, with all the circumstances of cruelty which such an action can admit of. This action is done in consequence of its principle being for the present strongest. And if there be no difference between inward principles, but only that of strength; the strength being given, you have the whole nature of the man given, so far as it relates to this matter. The action plainly corresponds to the principle, the principle being in that degree of strength it was: it therefore corresponds to the whole nature of the man. Upon comparing the actions and the whole nature, there arises no disproportion, there appears no unsuitableness between them. Thus the murder of a father and the nature of man correspond to each other, as the same nature and an act of filial duty. If there be no difference between inward principles, but only that of

strength, we can make no distinction between these two actions, considered as the actions of such a creature; but in our coolest hours must approve or disapprove them equally: than which nothing can be reduced to a greater absurdity.[2]

SERMON III.

The natural supremacy of reflection or conscience being 4
thus established, we may from it form a distinct notion of what is meant by human nature, when virtue is said to consist in following it, and vice in deviating from it.

As the idea of a civil constitution implies in it united a
strength, various subordinations under one direction, that of the supreme authority, the different strength of each particular member of the society not coming into the idea; whereas, if you leave out the subordination, the union, and the one direction, you destroy and lose it. So reason, several appetites, passions and affections, prevailing in different degrees of strength, is not that idea or notion of human nature; but that nature consists in these several principles considered as having a natural respect to each other, in the several passions being naturally subordinate to the one superior principle of reflection or conscience. Every bias, instinct, propension within, is a real part of our nature, but not the whole: add to these the superior faculty, whose office it is to adjust, manage, and preside over them, and take in this its natural superiority, and you complete the idea of human nature. And as in civil government the b

[2] [The doctrine of human depravity, at which Butler here glances, does not affect the justness of his reasoning. God intended that our passions and affections should all be gratified within proper limits; that self-love, which is but a just regard for our own happiness, should stimulate and control them; that all these principles should be subordinate to conscience; and conscience itself be enlightened and perfected by communion with Him. Evidences of this intention still remain, though conscience is dark, and often powerless. Self-love, violating duties owed to God and our neighbours, becomes selfishness; and passions which ought to *serve*, have assumed to *reign*. From 'the stately ruins' we may gather the design of the Builder, as justly perhaps, as if the temple had yet stood in all its beauty and completeness. See one of the noblest passages on this subject in 'Howe's Living Temple,' chap. iv., p. 128, Collins's Ed.]

constitution is broken in upon and violated by power and strength prevailing over authority; so the constitution of man is broken in upon and violated by the lower faculties or principles within prevailing over that which is in its nature supreme over them all. Thus, when it is said by ancient writers, that tortures and death are not so contrary to human nature as injustice; by this to be sure is not meant, that the aversion to the former in mankind is less strong and prevalent than their aversion to the latter: but that the former is only contrary to our nature considered in a partial view, and which takes in only the lowest part of it, that which we have in common with the brutes; whereas the latter is contrary to our nature, considered in a higher sense, as a system and constitution, contrary to the whole economy of man.[3]

1 [3] Every man in his physical nature is one individual single agent. He has likewise properties and principles, each of which may be considered separately, and without regard to the respects which they have to each other. Neither of these are the nature we are taking a view of. But it is the inward frame of man considered as a system or constitution; whose several parts are united, not by a physical principle of individuation, but by the respects they have to each other; the chief of which is the subjection which the appetites, passions, and particular affections have to the one supreme principle of reflection or conscience. The system or constitution is formed by and consists in these respects and this subjection. Thus the
2 body is a system or constitution; so is a tree: so is every machine. Consider all the several parts of a tree without the natural respects they have to each other, and you have not at all the idea of a tree; but add these respects, and this gives you the idea. The body may be impaired by sickness, a tree may decay, a machine be out of order, and yet the system and constitution of them not totally dissolved. There is plainly somewhat which answers to all this in the moral constitution of man. Whoever will consider his own nature, will see that the several appetites, passions, and particular affections, have different respects amongst themselves. They are restraints upon,
3 and are in a proportion to each other. This proportion is just and perfect, when all those under principles are perfectly coincident with conscience, so far as their nature permits, and in all cases under its absolute and entire direction. The least excess or defect, the least alteration of the due proportions amongst themselves, or of their coincidence with conscience, though not proceeding into

And from all these things put together, nothing can be more evident, than that, exclusive of revelation, man cannot be considered as a creature left by his Maker to act at random, and live at large up to the extent of his natural power, as passion, humour, wilfulness, happen to carry him; which is the condition brute creatures are in: but that from his make, constitution or nature, he is in the strictest and most proper sense a law to himself. He hath the rule of right within. What is wanting is only that he honestly attend to it.

The inquiries which have been made by men of leisure after some general rule, the conformity to, or disagreement from which, should denominate our actions good or evil, are in many respects of great service. Yet let any plain honest man, before he engages in any course of action, ask himself, Is this I am going about right, or is it wrong? Is it good, or is it evil? I do not in the least doubt but that this question would be answered agreeably to truth and virtue, by almost any fair man in almost any circumstance. Neither do there appear any cases which look like exceptions to this; but those of superstition, and of partiality to ourselves. Superstition may perhaps be somewhat of an exception; but partiality to ourselves is not; this being itself dishonesty. For a man to judge that to be the equitable, the moderate, the right part for him to act, which he would see to be hard, unjust, oppressive in another; this is plain vice, and can proceed only from great unfairness of mind.

But allowing that mankind hath the rule of right within himself, yet it may be asked, "What obligations are we

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action, is some degree of disorder in the moral constitution. But perfection, though plainly intelligible and supposable, was never attained by any man. If the higher principle of reflection maintains its place, and, as much as it can, corrects that disorder, and hinders it from breaking out into action, this is all that can be expected in such a creature as man. And though the appetites and passions have not their exact due proportion to each other; though they often strive for mastery with judgment or reflection; yet, since the superiority of this principle to all others is the chief respect which forms the constitution, so far as this superiority is maintained, the character, the man, is good, worthy, virtuous.

under to attend to and follow it?" I answer: It has been proved that man by his nature is a law to himself, without the particular distinct consideration of the positive sanctions of that law; the rewards and punishments which we feel, and those which from the light of reason we have ground to believe, are annexed to it. The question then carries its own answer along with it. Your obligation to obey this law, is its being the law of your nature. That your conscience approves of and attests to such a course of action, is itself alone an obligation. Conscience does not only offer itself to show us the way we should walk in, but it likewise carries its own authority with it, that it is our natural guide; the guide assigned us by the Author of our nature. It therefore belongs to our condition of being, it is our duty to walk in that path and follow this guide without looking about to see whether we may not possibly forsake them with impunity.

5 However, let us hear what is to be said against obeying this law of our nature. And the sum is no more than this, "Why should we be concerned about anything out of and beyond ourselves? If we do find within ourselves regards to others, and restraints of we know not how many different kinds; yet, these being embarrassments, and hindering us from going the nearest way to our own good, why should we not endeavour to suppress and get over them?"

Thus people go on with words, which when applied to human nature, and the condition in which it is placed in this world, have really no meaning. For does not all this kind of talk go upon supposition, that our happiness in this world consists in somewhat quite distinct from regards to others; and that it is the privilege of vice to be without restraint or confinement? whereas on the contrary, the enjoyments, in a manner all the common enjoyments of life, even the pleasures of vice, depend upon these regards of one kind or another to our fellow-creatures. Throw off all regards to others, and we should be quite indifferent to infamy and to honour; there could be no such thing at all as ambition; and scarce any such thing as covetousness; for we should likewise be equally indifferent to the disgrace of poverty, the several neglects and kinds of contempt which accompany this state; and to the reputation of riches, the regard

and respect they usually procure. Neither is restraint by any means peculiar to one course of life; but our very nature, exclusive of conscience, and our condition lays us under an absolute necessity of it. We cannot gain any end whatever without being confined to the proper means, which is often the most painful and uneasy confinement. And in numberless instances a present appetite cannot be gratified without such apparent and immediate ruin and misery, that the most dissolute man in the world chooses to forego the pleasure, rather than endure the pain.[4]

Is the meaning then, to indulge those regards to our fellow-creatures, and submit to those restraints, which upon the whole are attended with more satisfaction than uneasiness, and get over only those which bring more uneasiness and inconvenience than satisfaction? "Doubtless this was our meaning." You have changed sides then. Keep to this; be consistent with yourselves; and you and the men of virtue are in general perfectly agreed. But let us take care and avoid mistakes. Let it not be taken for granted that the temper of envy, rage, resentment, yields greater delight than meekness, forgiveness, compassion, and good will: especially when it is acknowledged that rage, envy, resentment, are in themselves mere misery; and the satisfaction arising from the indulgence of them is little more than relief from that misery; whereas the temper of compassion and benevolence is itself delightful; and the indulgence of it, by doing good, affords new positive delight and enjoyment. Let it not be taken for granted, that the satisfaction arising

[4] [Conscience *is* supreme among the powers of the soul. It must be remembered, however, that it is not absolutely supreme. It is not itself *our highest law;* but only *our interpretation of that law.* It is absolutely right, only when it agrees with that law. It may be wrong through want of clearness or fulness in the law, or through want of humility, and diligence in studying it. Hence the ethical paradox, noticed by Dr. Whewell. To act against one's conscience—to do what one thinks wrong—is always wrong: To act according to one's conscience—to do what one thinks right—is not always right. *As human nature* is, conscience needs to be enlightened, or it is no safe guide. "I am conscious," said an apostle, "of no wrong, yet am I not thereby justified. He that judgeth me, is the Lord."]

from the reputation of riches and power however obtained, and from the respect paid to them, is greater than the satisfaction arising from the reputation of justice, honesty, charity, and the esteem which is universally acknowledged to be their due. And if it be doubtful which of these satisfactions is the greatest, as there are persons who think neither of them very considerable, yet there can be no doubt concerning ambition and covetousness, virtue and a good mind, considered in themselves, and as leading to different courses of life; there can, I say, be no doubt, which temper and which course is attended with most peace and tranquillity of mind, which with most perplexity, vexation, and inconvenience. And both the virtues and vices which have been now mentioned, do in a manner equally imply in them regards of one kind or another to our fellow-creatures. And with respect to restraint and confinement: whoever will consider the restraints from fear and shame, the dissimulation, mean arts of concealment, servile compliances, one or other of which belong to almost every course of vice, will soon be convinced that the man of virtue is by no means upon a disadvantage in this respect. How many instances are there in which men feel and own and cry aloud under the chains of vice with which they are enthralled, and which yet they will not shake off? How many instances, in which persons manifestly go through more pains and self-denial to gratify a vicious passion, than would have been necessary to the conquest of it? To this is to be added, that when virtue is become habitual, when the temper of it is acquired, what was before confinement ceases to be so, by becoming choice and delight. Whatever restraint and guard upon ourselves may be needful to unlearn any unnatural distortion or odd gesture; yet, in all propriety of speech, natural behaviour must be the most easy and unrestrained. It is manifest that, in the common course of life, there is seldom any inconsistency between our duty and what is called interest. It is much seldomer that there is an inconsistency between duty and what is really our present interest; meaning by interest, happiness and satisfaction. Self-love then, though confined to the interest of the present world, does in general perfectly coincide with virtue, and leads us to one and the same course of life. But, whatever exceptions there are to this, which

are much fewer than they are commonly thought, all shall be set right at the final distribution of things. It is a manifest absurdity to suppose evil prevailing finally over good, under the conduct and administration of a perfect mind.[5]

The whole argument, which I have been now insisting upon, may be thus summed up and given you in one view. The nature of man is adapted to some course of action or other. Upon comparing some actions with this nature, they appear suitable and correspondent to it: from comparison of other actions with the same nature, there arises to our view some unsuitableness or disproportion. The correspondence of actions to the nature of the agent renders them natural; their disproportion to it, unnatural. That an action is correspondent to the nature of the agent, does not arise from its being agreeable to the principle which happens to be the strongest; for it may be so, and yet be quite disproportionate to the nature of the agent. The correspondence, therefore, or disproportion, arises from somewhat else. This can be nothing but a difference in nature and kind (altogether distinct from strength) between the inward principles. Some then are in nature and kind superior to others. And the

[5] [Note here, what is more fully brought out, in one of Butler's Sermons (No. XI., 'On the love of God'), the connexion between his ethical and his religious systems. "To be a just and good man," says he, "plainly carries with it a peculiar love to justice and goodness, whether these principles are the objects of contemplation in himself or in others. . . . . These qualities anywhere would inspire reverence and love. . . . . Seen in God, where they exist in the highest degree, to whom we stand in intimate relation, whose character is in a sense our own, they inspire devout reverence and the warmest love. Between his attributes and our holiest feelings, there is as real a correspondence as between the lowest appetite and its object. . . . . As the whole attention of life should be to obey his commands, so the highest enjoyment of it must arise from the contemplation of his character, and our relation to it, from a consciousness of his favour and approbation, and from the exercise of those affections towards him which could not but be raised by his presence." . . . "That he is infinite in power, perfect in wisdom and goodness, makes no alteration, but only that he is the object of those affections, raised to the highest pitch."]

correspondence arises from the action being conformable to the higher principle; and the unsuitableness from its being contrary to it. Reasonable self-love and conscience are the chief or superior principles in the nature of man: because an action may be suitable to this nature, though all other principles be violated; but becomes unsuitable, if either of those are. Conscience and self-love, if we understand our true happiness, always lead us the same way. Duty and interest are perfectly coincident; for the most part in this world, but entirely and in every instance if we take in the future, and the whole; this being implied in the notion of a good and perfect administration of things. Thus they who have been so wise in their generation as to regard only their own supposed interest, at the expense and to the injury of others, shall at last find, that he who has given up all the advantages of the present world, rather than violate his conscience and the relations of life, has infinitely better provided for himself, and secured his own interest and happiness.[6]

[6] [Upon some minds, these speculations on the nature of virtue may produce the impression, that virtue itself is uncertain, a creation of men's fancy without any corresponding reality. Such a conclusion would be most unjust. All subjects are uncertain when men come to discuss their *essence*. The authority and importance of virtue moreover, are admitted on all sides, though men differ when they speak of the grounds on which its authority rests. Above all, these differences in the case of virtue, arise really from the diversity of her claims; and the true ground of those claims is to be ascertained, not by denying opposite theories, but by harmonizing and combining them. These conflicts have arisen, not because virtue has no supports, but because she has so many: and to appeal to these conflicts as an evidence of her baselessness, is to turn against her the very excellencies with which she is endowed. Let it be affirmed (with Hobbes), that virtue is the creation of human policy, the voice of the magistrate enjoining what is expedient, and that all virtuous emotion is a form of fear; with Cudworth, that it is harmony with the nature of things, anterior to all law; or with Clarke, that it is conformity to reason, and itself immutable; with Shaftesbury, that it is rather an object of taste than of reason, and that its excellence is perceived more by emotion than by judgment, or by a 'moral sense,' as Hutcheson holds; with many, that virtue is what conduces to happiness, *our own*, as Leibnitz, Buffier, and Paley hold, or *that of others*, as was held by Shaftesbury,

Hutcheson, and in some measure by Butler, and Smith. Let it be affirmed, with Paley, that virtue is utility, and the love of the virtuous, the love of the useful; with Bentham, that it is happiness, and the desire to secure it; with Edwards, that it is love of moral excellence, and in proportion to its degrees; with Malebranche, that it is 'love of order;' with Smith, that it is what excites moral sympathy; with Hartley, that it owes its claims to association, or (with Brown) to suggestion; with Butler, that it is what is just and good, and shown to be so by our own nature, and by other indications of God's will. Let all these theories on the nature of virtue, or of virtuous emotion, be affirmed; and with limits and restrictions we may admit them all. To Hobbes it may be said, virtue does lead to the good of the community. All law ought to be in harmony with it, and we obey, both for fear and for conscience' sake. To Cudworth and Clarke, it may be said, that there are moral relations as certain as mathematical relations, and that morality is in the highest degree reasonable. To the rest, it may be said, in all virtue there are qualities which gratify the taste, as much as they satisfy the reason. It promotes happiness, material and spiritual, our own and that of others; and so is its own reward. It is useful, peace and prosperity ever following in its train; nor is there any surer way of securing 'the greatest happiness of the greatest number' than by diffusing it. Virtue is the highest 'excellence,' the most perfect 'order.' It excites sympathy, and the connexion between virtuous acts and correspondent feeling, is one of the most instructive instances of those laws of suggestion, on which Hartley and Brown insist. "We would not dissever these testimonies, but bind them together into the sum and strength of an accumulative argument . . . . Each party hath selected but one of its claims, and in the anxiety to exact it, would shed a comparative obscurity over all the rest. This is the contest between them—not whether morality be destitute of claims; but what out of the number that she possesses is the great and preeminent claim on which man should do her homage. Their controversy, perhaps, never may be settled, but to make the cause of virtue suffer on this account, would be to make it suffer from the very force and abundance of its recommendations." — *Chalmers' Bridgewater Tr.* p. 280.

In confirmation of these views, it may be noticed that Scripture enforces holiness by appealing to all the emotions on which these theories rest; fear, love, desire of personal happiness, good-will to our fellows, reverence for God. Sin, on the other hand, is described as 'vanity' (what cannot profit); 'misery' (what destroys happiness); 'unfitness' (not suited either to our nature or relations)

'wickedness,' (intrinsically wrong, degrading the creature, and dis pleasing to the Creator).

Keeping in mind all these discussions, and wishing to settle th questions raised by them with the Bible in our hands, let it be said "Here is a *wrong act*, what is the quality in it which we condemn, an for which we call it wrong?" It may be illegal: it is certainly mis chievous to the agent, and likely to be injurious to society: it i unreasonable and inconsistent with the relations of things: it vic lates our moral nature: it is condemned in Scripture, and so i opposed to the Divine will: anterior to that will, it is opposed t the Divine nature. All these answers have been given. The firs three are clearly insufficient; the last four are more satisfactory and are but different forms of saying substantially the same thing.

Let it be said again, "How is this act *known* to be wrong?" and it is answered, "Sometimes by the decision of law; sometime by its tendency, seen to be mischievous to ourselves, or to society sometimes by its evident inconsistency with our relations (as i ingratitude and injustice), or our reason; sometimes by its violatin our nature (as when we gratify passion against conscience); oftenest and with complete certainty, by direct appeals to Scripture, wher the Divine will (imperfectly taught by law, by utility, and b nature), is fully revealed."

Let it be asked again, "With what *state of mind* is this wron act to be regarded?" And the answer is at hand, "We *fear* th consequences, from law, from society, and from continued self reproach: our *reason* condemns it as unfitting: our *conscience* dis approves it, adding to the decision of the reason, moral disappro bation: The *Christian's heart*, moreover, feels besides, hatred t the thing itself (quite apart from all results), as something abhorren from his nature, and displeasing to a God of infinite purity an love."

Such are some of the questions with which ethical science i conversant: besides defining duties, it seeks to analyse virtuou acts, and to indicate their essence; it shows from what sourc our knowledge of duties is derived; and defines the moral state of heart with which they are regarded: and such is in substanc and in brief the answer of the Bible.]

SERMON IV

UPON THE GOVERNMENT OF THE TONGUE.

JAMES i. 26.

If any man among you seem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain.

THE translation of this text would be more determinate by being more literal, thus: If any man among you seemeth to be religious, not bridling his tongue, but deceiving his own heart, this man's religion is vain. This determines that the words, but deceiveth his own heart, are not put in opposition to seemeth to be religious, but to bridleth not his tongue. The certain determinate meaning of the text then being, that he who seemeth to be religious and bridleth not his tongue, but in that particular deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion is vain; we may observe somewhat very forcible and expressive in these words of St. James. As if the apostle had said, No man surely can make any pretences to religion who does not at least believe that he bridleth his tongue; if he puts on any appearance or face of religion, and yet does not govern his tongue, he must surely deceive himself in that particular, and think he does; and whoever is so unhappy as to deceive himself in this, to imagine he keeps that unruly faculty in due subjection, when indeed he does not, whatever the other part of his life be, his religion is vain; the government of the tongue being a most material restraint which virtue lays us under; without it no man can be truly religious.

In treating upon this subject I will consider,

First, what is the general vice or fault here referred to; or what disposition in men is supposed in moral reflections and precepts concerning bridling the tongue.

Secondly, when it may be said of any one, that he has a due government over himself in this respect.

I. Now the fault referred to, and the disposition supposed, in precepts and reflections concerning the government of the tongue, is not evil-speaking from malice, nor lying, nor bearing false witness from indirect selfish designs. The dis-

position to these, and the actual vices themselves, all come under other subjects. The tongue may be employed about and made to serve all the purposes of vice in tempting and deceiving, in perjury and injustice. But the thing here supposed and referred to is talkativeness; a disposition to be talking abstracted from the consideration of what is to be said, with very little or no regard to or thought of doing either good or harm. And let not any imagine this to be a slight matter, and that it deserves not to have so great weight laid upon it, till he has considered what evil is implied in it, and the bad effects which follow from it. It is perhaps true, that they who are addicted to this folly would choose to confine themselves to trifles and indifferent subjects, and so intend only to be guilty of being impertinent; but as they cannot go on for ever talking of nothing, as common matters will not afford a sufficient fund for perpetual continued discourse; when subjects of this kind are exhausted they will go on to defamation, scandal, divulging of secrets, their own secrets as well as those of others, anything rather than be silent. They are plainly hurried on in the heat of their talk to say quite different things from what they first intended, and which they afterwards wish unsaid; or improper things, which they had no other end in saying but only to afford employment to their tongue: and if these people expect to be heard and regarded (for there are some content merely with talking), they will invent to engage your attention; and when they have heard the least imperfect hint of an affair, they will out of their own head add the circumstances of time and place, and other matters to make out their story, and give the appearance of probability to it; not that they have any concern about being believed, otherwise than as a means of being heard. The thing is to engage your attention, to take you up wholly for the present time; what reflections will be made afterwards is in truth the least of their thoughts. And further, when persons who indulge themselves in these liberties of the tongue are in any degree offended with another, as little disgusts and misunderstandings will be, they allow themselves to defame and revile such an one without any moderation or bounds, though the offence is so very slight that they themselves would not do, nor perhaps wish him an injury in any other way; and

in this case the scandal and revilings are chiefly owing to talkativeness and not bridling their tongue, and so come under our present subject. The least occasion in the world will make the humour break out in this particular way, or in another. It is like a torrent which must and will flow, but the least thing imaginable will first of all give it either this or another direction, turn it into this or that channel; or like a fire, the nature of which, when in a heap of combustible matter, is to spread and lay waste all around, but any one of a thousand little accidents will occasion it to break out first either in this or another particular part.

The subject then before us, though it does run up into and can scarce be treated as entirely distinct from all others, yet it needs not be so much mixed or blended with them as it often is. Every faculty and power may be used as the instrument of premeditated vice and wickedness, merely as the most proper and effectual means of executing such designs: but if a man, from deep malice and desire of revenge, should meditate a falsehood with a settled design to ruin his neighbour's reputation, and should with great coolness and deliberation spread it, nobody would choose to say of such an one that he had no government of his tongue. A man may use the faculty of speech as an instrument of false witness, who yet has so entire a command over that faculty as never to speak but from forethought and cool design. Here the crime is injustice and perjury; and, strictly speaking, no more belongs to the present subject than perjury and injustice in any other way; but there is such a thing as a disposition to be talking for its own sake, from which persons often say anything, good or bad, of others merely as a subject of discourse, according to the particular temper they themselves happen to be in, and to pass away the present time. There is likewise to be observed in persons such a strong and eager desire of engaging attention to what they say, that they will speak good or evil, truth or otherwise, merely as one or the other seems to be most hearkened to; and this, though it is sometimes joined, is not the same with the desire of being thought important and men of consequence. There is in some such a disposition to be talking, that an offence of the slightest kind, and such as would not raise any other resentment, yet raises, if I may so speak, the

resentment of the tongue, puts it into a flame, into the most ungovernable motions. This outrage, when the person it respects is present, we distinguish in the lower rank of people by a peculiar term; and let it be observed, that though the decencies of behaviour are a little kept, the same outrage and virulence, indulged when he is absent, is an offence of the same kind. But not to distinguish any further in this manner; men run into faults and follies, which cannot so properly be referred to any one general head as this, that they have not a due government over their tongue.

And this unrestrained volubility and wantonness of speech is the occasion of numberless evils and vexations in life. It begets resentment in him who is the subject of it; sows the seed of strife and dissension amongst others; and inflames little disgusts and offences, which if let alone would wear away of themselves. It is often of as bad effect upon the good name of others as deep envy or malice; and, to say the least of it in this respect, it destroys and perverts a certain equity of the utmost importance to society to be observed, namely, that praise and dispraise, a good or bad character, should always be bestowed according to desert. The tongue used in such a licentious manner is like a sword in the hand of a madman; it is employed at random, it can scarce possibly do any good, and for the most part does a world of mischief; and implies not only great folly and a trifling spirit, but great viciousness of mind, great indifference to truth and falsity, and to the reputation, welfare, and good of others. So much reason is there for what St. James says of the tongue,[1] "It is a fire, a world of iniquity; it defileth the whole body, setteth on fire the course of nature, and it is set on fire of hell." This is the faculty or disposition which we are required to keep a guard upon; these are the vices and follies it runs into, when not kept under due restraint.

II. Wherein the due government of the tongue consists, or when it may be said of any one in a moral and religious sense that he bridleth his tongue, I come now to consider.

The due and proper use of any natural faculty or power is to be judged of by the end and design for which it was

[1] Chap. iii. 6.

given us. The chief purpose, for which the faculty of speech was given to man, is plainly that we might communicate our thoughts to each other, in order to carry on the affairs of the world, for business, and for our improvement in knowledge and learning; but the good Author of our nature designed us not only necessaries, but likewise enjoyment and satisfaction, in that being he hath graciously given, and in that condition of life he hath placed us in. There are secondary uses of our faculties; they administer to delight as well as to necessity, and as they are equally adapted to both, there is no doubt but he intended them for our gratification as well as for the support and continuance of our being. The secondary use of speech is to please and be entertaining to each other in conversation. This is, in every respect, allowable and right; it unites men closer in alliances and friendships, gives us a fellow-feeling of the prosperity and unhappiness of each other, and is in several respects serviceable to virtue and to promote good behaviour in the world; and provided there be not too much time spent in it, if it were considered only in the way of gratification and delight, men must have strange notions of God and of religion to think that He can be offended with it, or that it is in any way inconsistent with the strictest virtue; but the truth is, such sort of conversation, though it has no particular good tendency, yet it has a general good one; it is social and friendly, and tends to promote humanity, good nature, and civility.

As the end and use, so likewise the abuse of speech, relates to the one or other of these, either to business or to conversation. As to the former, deceit in the management of business and affairs does not properly belong to the subject now before us, though one may just mention that multitude, that endless number of words with which business is perplexed, when a much fewer would, as it should seem, better serve the purpose, but this must be left to those who understand the matter. The government of the tongue, considered as a subject of itself, relates chiefly to conversation, to that kind of discourse which usually fills up the time spent in friendly meetings and visits of civility; and the danger is, lest persons entertain themselves and others at the expense of their wisdom and their virtue, and to the

injury or offence of their neighbour. If they will observe and keep clear of these they may be as free, and easy, and unreserved as they can desire.

The cautions to be given for avoiding these dangers, and to render conversation innocent and agreeable, fall under the following particulars:—Silence; talking of indifferent things; and, which makes up too great a part of conversation, giving of characters, speaking well or evil of others.

The wise man observes, that "there is a time to speak and a time to keep silence." One meets with people in the world who seem never to have made the last of these observations, and yet these great talkers do not at all speak from their having anything to say, as every sentence shows, but only from their inclination to be talking; their conversation is merely an exercise of the tongue, no other humane faculty has any share in it. It is strange these persons can help reflecting that unless they have in truth a superior capacity, and are in an extraordinary manner furnished for conversation, if they are entertaining it is at their own expense. Is it possible that it should never come into people's thoughts to suspect whether or no it be to their advantage to show so very much of themselves? "Oh that ye would altogether hold your peace! and it should be your wisdom."[2] Remember likewise there are persons who love fewer words, an inoffensive sort of people, and who deserve some regard, though of too still and composed tempers for you. Of this number was the son of Sirach, for he plainly speaks from experience, when he says, "As hills of sand are to the steps of the aged, so is one of many words to a quiet man." But one would think it should be obvious to every one that when they are in company with their superiors of any kind, in years, knowledge, and experience; when proper and useful subjects are discoursed of which they cannot bear a part in, that these are times for silence; when they should learn to hear and be attentive, at least, in their turn. It is, indeed, a very unhappy way these people are in; they in a manner cut themselves out from all advantage of conversation except that of being entertained with their own talk, their business in coming into company not being at all to be in-

[2] Job xiii.

formed, to hear, to learn, but to display themselves, or rather to exert their faculty, and talk without any design at all; and, if we consider conversation as an entertainment, as somewhat to unbend the mind—as a diversion from the cares, the business, and the sorrows of life—it is of the very nature of it that the discourse be mutual: this, I say, is implied in the very notion of what we distinguish by conversation or being in company. Attention to the continued discourse of one alone grows more painful often than the cares and business we come to be diverted from; he, therefore, who imposes this upon us, is guilty of a double offence, arbitrarily enjoining silence upon all the rest, and likewise obliging them to this painful attention.

I am sensible these things are apt to be passed over as too little to come into a serious discourse; but in reality men are obliged, even in point of morality and virtue, to observe all the decencies of behaviour. The greatest evils in life have had their rise from somewhat which was thought of too little importance to be attended to; and as to the matter we are now upon it is absolutely necessary to be considered, for if people will not maintain a due government over themselves, in regarding proper times and seasons for silence, but will be talking, they certainly, whether they design it or not at first, will go on to scandal and evil speaking and divulging secrets.

If it were needful to say anything further to persuade men to learn this lesson of silence, one might put them in mind how insignificant they render themselves by this excessive talkativeness, insomuch that, if they do chance to say anything which deserves to be attended to and regarded, it is lost in the variety and abundance which they utter of another sort.

The occasions of silence then are obvious, and one would think should be easily distinguished by everybody: namely, when a man has nothing to say; or nothing, but what is better unsaid: better, either in regard to the particular persons he is present with; or from its being an interruption to conversation itself; or to conversation of a more agreeable kind; or better, lastly, with regard to himself. I will end this particular with two reflections of the wise man: one of which, in the strongest manner, exposes the ridiculous

part of this licentiousness of the tongue; and the other, the great danger and viciousness of it. "When he that is a fool walketh by the way, his wisdom faileth him, and he saith to every one that he is a fool."[3] The other is, "In the multitude of words there wanteth not sin."[4]

As to the government of the tongue in respect to talking upon indifferent subjects: after what has been said concerning the due government of it in respect to the occasions and times for silence, there is little more necessary than only to caution men to be fully satisfied that the subjects are indeed of an indifferent nature, and not to spend too much time in conversation of this kind. But persons must be sure to take heed, that the subject of their discourse be at least of an indifferent nature; that it be no way offensive to virtue, religion, or good manners; that it be not of a licentious, dissolute sort, this leaving always ill impressions upon the mind; that it be no way injurious or vexatious to others; and that too much time be not spent this way, to the neglect of those duties and offices of life which belong to their station and condition in the world. However, though there is not any necessity that men should aim at being important and weighty in every sentence they speak: yet since useful subjects, at least of some kinds, are as entertaining as others; a wise man, even when he desires to unbend his mind from business, would choose that the conversation might turn upon somewhat instructive.

The last thing is, the government of the tongue as relating to discourse of the affairs of others, and giving of characters. These are in a manner the same: and one can scarce call it an indifferent subject, because discourse upon it almost perpetually runs into somewhat criminal.

And first of all, it were very much to be wished that this did not take up so great a part of conversation, because it is indeed a subject of a dangerous nature. Let any one consider the various interests, competitions, and little misunderstandings which arise amongst men, and he will soon see that he is not unprejudiced and impartial, that he is not, as I may speak, neutral enough to trust himself with talking of the character and concerns of his neighbour in a free, careless, and unreserved manner. There is perpetually, and

[3] Eccles. x. 3. [4] Prov. x. 19.

often it is not attended to, a rivalship amongst people of one kind or another, in respect to wit, beauty, learning, fortune: and that one thing will insensibly influence them to speak to the disadvantage of others, even where there is no formed malice or ill design. Since therefore it is so hard to enter into this subject without offending; the first thing to be observed is, that people should learn to decline it; to get over that strong inclination most have to be talking of the concerns and behaviour of their neighbour.

But since it is impossible that this subject should be wholly excluded conversation, and since it is necessary that the characters of men should be known, the next thing is, that it is a matter of importance what is said; and, therefore, that we should be religiously scrupulous and exact to say nothing, either good or bad, but what is true. I put it thus, because it is in reality of as great importance to the good of society that the characters of bad men should be known, as that the characters of good men should. People who are given to scandal and detraction may indeed make an ill use of this observation; but truths, which are of service towards regulating our conduct, are not to be disowned, or even concealed, because a bad use may be made of them. This however would be effectually prevented, if these two things were attended to: first, that, though it is equally of bad consequence to society, that men should have either good or ill characters which they do not deserve; yet, when you say somewhat good of a man which he does not deserve, there is no wrong done him in particular; whereas, when you say evil of a man which he does not deserve, here is a direct formal injury, a real piece of injustice done him. This therefore makes a wide difference; and gives us, in point of virtue, much greater latitude in speaking well than ill of others. Secondly, a good man is friendly to his fellow-creatures, and a lover of mankind; and so will, upon every occasion, and often without any, say all the good he can of everybody: but, so far as he is a good man, will never be disposed to speak evil of any, unless there be some other reason for it, besides barely that it is true. If he be charged with having given an ill character, he will scarce think it a sufficient justification of himself to say it was a true one; unless he can also give some further account how

he came to do so. A just indignation against particular instances of villany, where they are great and scandalous; or to prevent an innocent man from being deceived and betrayed, when he has great trust and confidence in one who does not deserve it. Justice must be done to every part of a subject, when we are considering it. If there be a man, who bears a fair character in the world, whom yet we know to be without faith or honesty, to be really an ill man; it must be allowed in general, that we shall do a piece of service to society, by letting such a one's true character be known. This is no more than what we have an instance of in our Saviour himself;[5] though he was mild and gentle beyond example. However, no words can express too strongly the caution which should be used in such a case as this.

Upon the whole matter: if people would observe the obvious occasions of silence; if they would subdue the inclination to tale-bearing; and that eager desire to engage attention, which is an original disease in some minds; they would be in little danger of offending with their tongue and would, in a moral and religious sense, have due government over it.

I will conclude with some precepts and reflections of the son of Sirach upon this subject. "Be swift to hear: and, if thou hast understanding, answer thy neighbour; if not, lay thy hand upon thy mouth. Honour and shame is in talk. A man of an ill tongue is dangerous in his city, and he that is rash in his talk shall be hated. A wise man will hold his tongue till he see opportunity; but a babbler and a fool will regard no time. He that useth many words shall be abhorred; and he that taketh to himself authority therein shall be hated. A backbiting tongue hath disquieted many; strong cities hath it pulled down, and overthrown the houses of great men. The tongue of a man is his fall; but if thou love to hear, thou shalt receive understanding."

[5] Mark xii. 38–40.

SERMONS V., VI.

UPON COMPASSION.[1]

[I ON compassion as a principle of human nature. Sermon V.
INTRODUCTORY.

a Compassion as natural as self-love.

Note on Hobbes' doctrine,

1 He holds that compassion is care for ourselves.

2 This confounds different things,

3 And makes fear and compassion identical.

4 Which are yet admitted by all to be different, as is clear from a particular case.

5 Absurdity shown from the greater pity felt for friends than for others; a fact inexplicable on Hobbes' view.

6 Just accounts of human nature important.

7 Pity and fear are often both felt when men contemplate distress;

8 Which are instances of sympathy—the quality Hobbes denies. This quality neither self-love nor benevolence.

[[1] The following sermons of Bishop Butler have a close connexion with his ethical and religious system. The first Three Sermons on Human Nature contain the essential principle of his method of study, and from them may be gathered the course of reasoning likely to be adopted by him in similar cases. In the following sermons he considers four sets of affections: Compassion (v. vi.), Resentment (viii. ix.), Benevolence (xi. xii.) or love to our neighbours, and Piety or love to God (xiii. xiv.) In each, he shows that men possess these affections; he then considers for what end men are endowed with them; and, from the consideration of the end for which these affections were given, he deduces and enforces the appropriate duty. The sphere and limits of each affection are hence easily ascertained. The germs of many of the thoughts are contained in the Three Sermons; but the development here given is both interesting and important.

The grounds on which all the duties connected with these affections are here based are somewhat peculiar. Some say that these duties are obligatory, because they are conducive to our happiness; others, because they are enjoined by special command: Butler says it is because they are in conformity with God's general intentions as shown in the constitution of our nature.]

b Compassion for misery stronger than sympathy with joy: reason for the force and distinctness of this feeling.

c Not a weakness, any more than our senses are. It belongs to our nature, and is necessary to aid and perfect our reason.

1 First, compassion and kindred affections increase our happiness.

a Compassion is part of our sympathy, itself pleasurable when it contemplates the happiness of others.

b Even when exercised towards suffering compassion diminishes it, and

c Produces a calm satisfaction:

d While a callousness of feeling is incompatible with noble enjoyment.

2 Secondly, compassion and kindred affections prompt and guide men in duty.

a They are to reason, what particular appetites are to self-love; giving the distressed access to us in a way otherwise impossible.

b Even unfeeling men are restrained by a regard for the compassion of the world towards the suffering.

c Stoical apathy a diseased condition, which yet leaves its victims subject to many base passions.

d Hardness of heart originates in such a love of pleasure as disregards duty, and is yet destructive of much enjoyment.

e Compassion peculiarly strong in Him who was also perfect in holiness.

Conclusion: Over-refinement in morals and religion highly mischievous.

II On compassion, its uses and limits, Sermon VI.

Intro. The purpose or final cause of affections is discoverable, and, when discovered, is highly instructive.

Men can occasion misery more than happiness, and hence they need compassion in a high degree, to check the exercise of this power.

3 The final cause of compassion, and its consequent limits.

a It prevents misery, restraining envy, etc.

b It relieves misery, as do other things.

It is a call of Nature, and

Preferable even to mere good-will; for the objects of it have more need, and we are better able to help them.

It may be exercised in excess; but the greater danger is on the side of insensibility.

4 Uses of the foregoing reflections.
a As men have more power in diminishing misery than in promoting happiness, it is wise to seek freedom from misery ("peace") rather than high enjoyments in life.
b, c, d.]

V.

ROMANS xii. 15.

Rejoice with them that do rejoice, and weep with them that weep. I

Every man is to be considered in two capacities, the private Intr
and public: as designed to pursue his own interest, and likewise to contribute to the good of others. Whoever will a
consider, may see, that in general there is no contrariety between these; but that from the original constitution of man, and the circumstances he is placed in, they perfectly coincide, and mutually carry on each other. But, amongst the great variety of affections or principles of action in our nature, some in their primary intention and design seem to belong to the single or private, others to the public or social capacity. The affections required in the text are of the latter sort. When we rejoice in the prosperity of others, and compassionate their distresses, we, as it were, substitute them for ourselves, their interest for our own; and have the same kind of pleasure in their prosperity and sorrow in their distress, as we have from reflection upon our own. Now there is nothing strange or unaccountable in our being thus carried out, and affected towards the interests of others.[2]

[[2] The reasoning of this sermon, and of the note of Butler on Hobbes, will be more intelligible from a perusal of Hobbes' account of compassion: "Pity is imagination or fiction of future calamity to ourselves, proceeding from the sense of another man's calamity. But when it lighteth on such as we think have not deserved the same, the compassion is greater, because then there appeareth more probability that the same may happen to us; for the evil that happeneth to an innocent man may happen to every man. But when we see a man suffer for great crimes, which we cannot easily think will fall upon ourselves, the pity is the less. And therefore men are apt to pity those whom they love; for, whom they love they think worthy of good, and therefore not worthy of calamity. Thence it is also that men pity the vices of some persons at the

For, if there be any appetite, or any inward principle besides self-love; why may there not be an affection to the good of our fellow-creatures, and delight from that affection being gratified, and uneasiness from things going contrary to it?[3]

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first sight only, out of love to their aspect. The contrary of pity is hardness of heart, proceeding either from slowness of imagination, or some extreme great opinion of their own exemption from the like calamity, or from hatred of all or most men."—'Human Nature,' chap. ix.]

1 [3] There being manifestly this appearance of men's substituting
others for themselves, and being carried out and affected towards
them as towards themselves, some persons, who have a system
which excludes every affection to this sort, have taken a pleasant
method to solve it, and tell you it is not another you are at all con-
cerned about, but yourself only, when you feel the affection called
compassion, *i.e.* Here is a plain matter of fact, which men cannot
reconcile with the general account they think fit to give of things;
they therefore, instead of that manifest fact, substitute another,
which is reconcilable to their own scheme. For does not every-
2 body by compassion, mean an affection, the object of which is
another in distress? Instead of this, but designing to have it mis-
taken for this, they speak of an affection or passion, the object of
which is ourselves, or danger to ourselves. Hobbes defines pity,
imagination, or fiction, of future calamity to ourselves, proceeding
from the sense (he means sight or knowledge) of another man's
3 calamity. Thus fear and compassion would be the same idea, and
a fearful and a compassionate man the same character, which every
4 one immediately sees are totally different. Further, to those w[illegible]
give any scope to their affections, there is no perception or inward
feeling more universal than this; that one who has been merciful
and compassionate throughout the course of his behaviour, should
himself be treated with kindness, if he happens to fall into circum-
stances of distress. Is fear then, or cowardice, so great a recom-
mendation to the favour of the bulk of mankind? Or is it not
plain, that mere fearlessness (and therefore not the contrary) is
one of the most popular qualifications? This shows that mankind
are not affected towards compassion as fear, but as somewhat totally
different.

5 Nothing would more expose such accounts as these of the affections which are favourable and friendly to our fellow-creatures, than to substitute the definitions which this author, and others who follow his steps, give of such affections, instead of the words by which they are commonly expressed. Hobbes, after having laid

Of those two, delight in the prosperity of others and compassion for their distresses, the last is felt much more generally than the former. Though men do not universally rejoice with all whom they see rejoice, yet, accidental obstacles removed, they naturally compassionate all in some degree whom they see in distress, so far as they have any real perception or sense of that distress: insomuch that words expressing this latter, pity, compassion, frequently occur; whereas we have scarce any single one, by which the former is distinctly expressed. Congratulation indeed answers condolence: but both these words are intended to signify certain forms of civility, rather than any inward sensation or feeling. This difference or inequality is so remarkable, that we plainly consider compassion as itself an original, distinct, particular affection in human nature; whereas to rejoice in the good of others, is only a conse-

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down that pity or compassion is only fear for ourselves, goes on to explain the reason why we pity our friends in distress more than others. Now substitute the definition instead of the word pity in this place, and the inquiry will be, why we fear our friends, etc., which words (since he really does not mean why we are afraid of them), make no question or sentence at all. So that common language, the words "to compassionate," "to pity," cannot be accommodated to his account of compassion. The very joining of the words "to pity our friends," is a direct contradiction to his definition of pity; because those words so joined, necessarily express that our friends are the objects of the passion; whereas his definition of it asserts, that ourselves (or danger to ourselves) are the only objects of it. He might indeed have avoided this absurdity, by plainly saying what he is going to account for, namely, why the sight of the innocent, or of our friends in distress, raises greater fear for ourselves than the sight of other persons in distress. But had he put the thing thus plainly, the fact itself would have been doubted, that the sight of our friends in distress raises in us greater fear for ourselves, than the sight of others in distress. And in the next place it would immediately have occurred to every one, that the fact now mentioned, which at least is doubtful, whether true or false, was not the same with this fact, which nobody ever doubted, that the sight of our friends in distress raises in us greater compassion than the sight of others in distress: Every one, I say, would have seen that these are not the same, but

quence of the general affection of love and goodwill to them. The reason and account of which matter is this. When a man has obtained any particular advantage or felicity, his end is gained; and he does not in that particular want the assistance of another: there was therefore no need of a distinct affection towards that felicity of another already obtained; neither would such affection directly carry him to do good to that person; whereas men in distress want assistance; and compassion leads us directly to assist them. The object of the former is the present felicity of another, the object of the latter is the present misery of another; it is easy to see that the latter wants a particular affection for

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two different inquiries; and consequently, that fear and compassion are not the same. Suppose a person to be in real danger, and by some means or other to have forgot it; any trifling accident, any sound might alarm him, recall the danger to his remembrance, and renew his fear: but it is almost too grossly ridiculous (though it is to show an absurdity) to speak of that sound or accident as an object of compassion; and yet according to Mr. Hobbes, our greatest friend in distress is no more to us, no more the object of compassion or of any affection in our heart. Neither the one or the other raises any emotion in our mind, but only the thoughts of our liableness to calamity, and the fear of it; and both equally do this.

6 It is fit such sort of accounts of human nature should be shown to be what they really are, because there is raised upon them a general scheme, which undermines the whole foundation of common justice and honesty. See Hobbes 'Of Human Nature,' c. 9, § 10.

7 There are often three distinct perceptions or inward feelings, upon sight of persons in distress: real sorrow and concern for the misery of our fellow-creatures; some degree of satisfaction from a consciousness of our freedom from that misery; and, as the mind passes on from one thing to another, it is not unnatural from such an occasion to reflect upon our own liableness to the same or other calamities. The two last frequently accompany the first, but it is the first only which is properly compassion, of which the distressed are the objects, and which directly carries us with calmness and thought to their assistance. Any one of these, from various and complicated reasons, may in particular cases prevail over the other two; and there are, I suppose, instances where the bare sight of distress, without our feeling any compassion for it, may be the occasion of either or both of the two latter perceptions. One might

8 add that if there be really any such thing as the fiction or imagina-

its relief, and that the former does not want one, because it does not want assistance. And upon supposition of a distinct affection in both cases, the one must rest in the exercise of itself, having nothing further to gain; the other does not rest in itself, but carries us on to assist the distressed.

But, supposing these affections natural to the mind, particularly the last; "Has not each man troubles enough of his own? must he indulge an affection which appropriates to himself those of others? which leads him to contract the least desirable of all friendships, friendships with the unfortunate? Must we invert the known rule of prudence, and choose to associate ourselves with the distressed? Or, allowing that we ought, so far as it is in our power to relieve them, yet is it not better to do this from reason and duty? Does not passion and affection of every kind perpetually mislead us? Nay, is not passion and affection itself a weakness, and what a perfect being must be entirely free from?" Perhaps so, but it is mankind I am speaking of; imperfect creatures, and who, naturally, and from the condition we are placed in, necessarily depend upon each other. With respect to such creatures, it would be found of as bad consequence to eradicate all natural affections, as to be entirely governed by them. This would almost sink us to the condition of brutes, and that would leave us without a sufficient principle of action. Reason alone, whatever any one may wish, is not in reality a sufficient motive of

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tion of danger to ourselves from sight of the miseries of others, which Hobbes speaks of, and which he has absurdly mistaken for the whole of compassion; if there be anything of this sort common to mankind, distinct from the reflection of reason, it would be a most remarkable instance of what was farthest from his thoughts, namely, of a mutual sympathy between each particular of the species, a fellow-feeling common to mankind. It would not indeed be an example of our substituting others for ourselves, but it would be an example of our substituting ourselves for others. And as it would not be an instance of benevolence, so neither would it be any instance of self-love. For this phantom of danger to ourselves, naturally rising to view upon sight of the distresses of others, would be no more an instance of love to ourselves, than the pain of hunger is.

virtue in such a creature as man; but this reason joined with those affections which God has impressed upon his heart; and when these are allowed scope to exercise themselves, but under strict government and direction of reason, then it is we act suitably to our nature, and to the circumstances God has placed us in. Neither is affection itself at all a weakness, nor does it argue defect, any otherwise than as our senses and appetites do, they belong to our condition of nature, and are what we cannot be without. God Almighty is, to be sure, unmoved by passion or appetite, unchanged by affection, but then it is to be added, that he neither sees, nor hears, nor perceives things by any senses like ours, but in a manner infinitely more perfect. Now, as it is an absurdity almost too gross to be mentioned, for a man to endeavour to get rid of his senses, because the Supreme Being discerns things more perfectly without them; it is as real, though not so obvious an absurdity, to endeavour to eradicate the passions he has given us, because he is without them. For, since our passions are as really a part of our constitution as our senses, since the former as really belong to our condition of nature as the latter; to get rid of either, is equally a violation of and breaking in upon that nature and constitution he has given us. Both our senses and our passions are a supply to the imperfection of our nature; thus they show that we are such sort of creatures, as to stand in need of those helps which higher orders of creatures do not. But it is not the supply but the deficiency, as it is not a remedy but a disease which is the imperfection. However, our appetites, passions, senses, no way imply disease, nor indeed do they imply deficiency or imperfection of any sort, but only this, that the constitution of Nature, according to which God has made us, is such as to require them. And it is so far from being true, that a wise man must entirely suppress compassion, and all fellow-feeling for others, as a weakness; and trust to reason alone, to teach and enforce upon him the practice of the several charities we owe to our kind, that, on the contrary, even the bare exercise of such affections would itself be for the good and happiness of the world, and the imperfection of the higher principles of reason and religion in man, the little influence they have upon our practice, and the strength and pre-

valency of contrary ones plainly require these affections, to be a restraint upon these latter, and a supply to the deficiencies of the former.

First, The very exercise itself of these affections in a just and reasonable manner and degree, would upon the whole increase the satisfactions, and lessen the miseries of life. 1

It is the tendency and business of virtue and religion to procure, as much as may be, universal good-will, trust, and friendship amongst mankind. If this could be brought to obtain; and each man enjoyed the happiness of others, as every one does that of a friend; and looked upon the success and prosperity of his neighbour, as every one does upon that of his children and family; it is too manifest to be insisted upon, how much the enjoyments of life would be increased. There would be so much happiness introduced into the world, without any deduction or inconvenience from it, in proportion as the precept of rejoicing with those who rejoice was universally obeyed. Our Saviour has owned this good affection as belonging to our nature, in the parable of the lost sheep; and does not think it to the disadvantage of a perfect state, to represent its happiness as capable of increase from reflection upon that of others. a

But since in such a creature as man, compassion or sorrow for the distress of others, seems so far necessarily connected with joy in their prosperity, as that whoever rejoices in one must unvoidably compassionate the other; there cannot be that delight or satisfaction, which appears to be so considerable, without the inconveniences, whatever they are, of compassion.

However, without considering this connexion, there is no doubt but that more good than evil, more delight than sorrow, arises from compassion itself; there being so many things which balance the sorrow of it. There is first the relief which the distressed feel from this affection in others towards them. There is likewise the additional misery which they would feel from the reflection that no one commiserated their case. It is indeed true, that any disposition, prevailing beyond a certain degree, becomes somewhat wrong; and we have ways of speaking, which though they do not directly express that excess, yet, always lead our thoughts to it, and give us the notion of it. Thus, when b

mention is made of delight in being pitied, this always conveys to our mind the notion of somewhat which is really a weakness: the manner of speaking, I say, implies a certain weakness and feebleness of mind, which is and ought to be disapproved. But men of the greatest fortitude would in distress feel uneasiness, from knowing that no person in the world had any sort of compassion or real concern for them; and in some cases, especially when the temper is enfeebled by sickness or any long and great distress, doubtless, would feel a kind of relief even from the helpless good-will and
c ineffectual assistances of those about them. Over against the sorrow of compassion is likewise to be set a peculiar calm kind of satisfaction, which accompanies it, unless in cases where the distress of another is by some means so brought home to ourselves, as to become in a manner our own; or when from weakness of mind the affection rises too high, which ought to be corrected. This tranquillity or calm satisfaction proceeds, partly from consciousness of a right affection and temper of mind, and partly from a sense of our own freedom from the misery we compassionate. This last may possibly appear to some at first sight faulty; but it really is not so. It is the same with that positive enjoyment, which sudden ease from pain for the present affords, arising from a real sense of misery, joined with a sense of our freedom from it; which in all cases must afford some degree of satisfaction.

d To these things must be added the observation, which respects both the affections we are considering; that they who have got over all fellow-feeling for others, have withal contracted a certain callousness of heart, which renders them insensible to most other satisfactions, but those of the grossest kind.

2 Secondly, Without the exercise of these affections, men would certainly be much more wanting in the offices of charity they owe to each other, and likewise more cruel and injurious, than they are at present.

a The private interest of the individual would not be sufficiently provided for by reasonable and cool self-love alone: therefore the appetites and passions are placed within as a
ward and further security, without which it would not be
lue care of. It is manifest our life would be neglected,

were it not for the calls of hunger, and thirst, and weariness; notwithstanding that without them reason would assure us, that the recruits of food and sleep are the necessary means of our preservation. It is therefore absurd to imagine, that, without affection, the same reason alone would be more effectual to engage us to perform the duties we owe to our fellow-creatures. One of this make would be as defective, as much wanting, considered with respect to society; as one of the former make would be defective, or wanting, considered as an individual, or in his private capacity. Is it possible any can in earnest think, that a public spirit, *i. e.* a settled reasonable principle of benevolence to mankind, is so prevalent and strong in the species, as that we may venture to throw off the under affections, which are its assistants, carry it forward and mark out particular courses for it; family, friends, neighbourhood, the distressed, our country? The common joys and the common sorrows, which belong to these relations and circumstances, are as plainly useful to society; as the pain and pleasure belonging to hunger, thirst, and weariness are of service to the individual. In defect of that higher principle of reason, compassion is often the only way by which the indigent can have access to us: and therefore to eradicate this, though it is not indeed formally to deny them that assistance which is their due; yet it is to cut them off from that which is too frequently their only way of obtaining it. And as for those who have shut up this door against the complaints of the miserable. and conquered this affection in themselves; even these persons will be under great restraints from the same affection in others. Thus a man who has himself no sense of injustice, cruelty, oppression, will be kept from running the utmost lengths of wickedness, by fear of that detestation, and even resentment of inhumanity, in many particular instances of it, which compassion for the object, towards whom such inhumanity is exercised, excites in the bulk of mankind. And this is frequently the chief danger, and the chief restraint, which tyrants and the great oppressors of the world feel.

In general, experience will show, that as want of natural appetite to food supposes and proceeds from some bodily disease; so the apathy the stoics talk of as much supposes or is accompanied with somewhat amiss in the moral cha-

racter, is that which is the health of the mind. Those who formerly aimed at this upon the foot of philosophy, appear to have had better success in eradicating the affections of tenderness and compassion, than they had with the passions of envy, pride, and resentment; these latter, at best, were but concealed, and that imperfectly too. How far this observation may be extended to such as endeavour to suppress the natural impulses of their affections, in order to form themselves for business and the world, I shall not determine. But there does not appear any capacity or relation to be named, in which men ought to be entirely deaf to the calls of affection, unless the judicial one is to be excepted.

d And as to those who are commonly called the men of pleasure, it is manifest that the reason they set up for hardness of heart, is to avoid being interrupted in their course, by the ruin and misery they are the authors of: neither are persons of this character always the most free from the impotencies of envy and resentment. What may men at last bring themselves to, by suppressing their passions and affections of one kind, and leaving those of the other in their full strength? But surely it might be expected that persons who make pleasure their study and their business, if they understood what they profess, would reflect how many of the entertainments of life, how many of those kinds of amusements which seem peculiar to belong to men of leisure and education, they become insensible to by this acquired hardness of heart.

e I shall close these reflections with barely mentioning the behaviour of that Divine person, who was the example of all perfection in human nature, as represented in the Gospels mourning, and, even in a literal sense, weeping over the distresses of his creatures.

The observation already made, that, of the two affections mentioned in the text, the latter exerts itself much more than the former; that, from the original constitution of human nature we much more generally and sensibly compassionate the distressed, than rejoice with the prosperous, requires to be particularly considered. This observation therefore, with the reflections which arise out of it, and which it leads our thoughts to, shall be the subject of discourse.

For the conclusion of this, let me just take notice of the Concl. danger of over-great refinements;[4] of going beside or beyond the plain, obvious, first appearances of things, upon the subject of morals and religion. The least observation will show, how little the generality of men are capable of speculations. Therefore morality and religion must be somewhat plain and easy to be understood: it must appeal to what we call common sense, as distinguished from superior capacity and improvement; because it appeals to mankind. Persons of superior capacity and improvement have often fallen into errors, which no one of mere common understanding could. Is it possible that one of this latter character could ever of himself have thought, that there was absolutely no such thing in mankind as affection to the good of others; suppose of parents to their children; or that what he felt upon seeing a friend in distress, was only fear for himself; or, upon supposition of the affections of kindness and compassion, that it was the business of wisdom and virtue to set him about extirpating them as fast as he could? And yet each of these manifest contradictions to Nature has been laid down by men of speculation, as a discovery in moral philosophy; which they, it seems, have found out through all the specious appearances to the contrary. This reflection may be extended further. The extravagancies of enthusiasm and superstition do not at all lie in the road of common sense; and therefore, so far as they are original mistakes, must be owing to going beside or beyond it. Now, since inquiry and examination can relate only to things so obscure and uncertain as to stand in need of it, and to persons who are capable of it; the proper advice to be given to plain honest men, to secure them from the extremes both of superstition and irreligion, is that of the son of Sirach; "In every good work trust thy own soul; for this is the keeping of the commandment."[5]

[[4] The over-refinements referred to in this closing paragraph are chiefly those of Hobbes; but a very little acquaintance with ethical systems will enable the reader to multiply instances of the tendency which Butler condemns: see pp. 349, 389, 390. Examples of over-refinement in religion may be seen on p. 107; and in Sermon xi.]

[5] Ecclus. xxxii. 23.

II

VI.

INTRO. THERE is a much more exact correspondence between the natural and moral world, than we are apt to take notice of. The inward frame of man does in a peculiar manner answer to the external condition and circumstances of life, in which he is placed. This is a particular instance of that general observation of the son of Sirach:[a] "All things are double one against another, and God hath made nothing imperfect." The several passions and affections in the heart of man, compared with the circumstances of life in which he is placed, afford to such as will attend to them, as certain instances of final causes, as any whatever which are more commonly alleged for such: since those affections lead him to a certain determinate course of action suitable to those circumstances; as (for instance) compassion, to relieve the distressed. And as all observations of final causes, drawn from the principles of action in the heart of man, compared with the condition he is placed in, serve all the good uses which instances of final causes in the material world about us do; and both these are equally proofs of wisdom and design in the Author of Nature; so the former serve to further good purposes; they show us what course of life we are made for, what is our duty, and in a peculiar manner enforce upon us the practice of it.

Suppose we are capable of happiness and of misery in degrees equally intense and extreme, yet, we are capable of the latter for a much longer time beyond all comparison. We see men in the tortures of pain for hours, days, and, excepting the short suspensions of sleep, for months together without intermission; to which no enjoyments of life do, in degree and continuance, bear any sort of proportion. And such is our make and that of the world about us, that anything may become the instrument of pain and sorrow to us. Thus almost any one man is capable of doing mischief to any other, though he may not be capable of doing him good; and if he be capable of doing him some good, he is capable of doing him more evil. And it is, in numberless cases, much more in our power to lessen the miseries of others, than to promote their positive happiness, any otherwise than as the

[a] Ecclus. xlii. 24.

former often includes the latter; ease from misery occasioning for some time the greatest positive enjoyment. This constitution of Nature, namely, that it is so much more in our power to occasion and likewise to lessen misery, than to promote positive happiness, plainly required a particular affection, to hinder us from abusing, and to incline us to make a right use of the former powers, *i. e.* the powers both to occasion and to lessen misery; over and above what was necessary to induce us to make a right use of the latter power, that of promoting positive happiness. The power we have over the misery of our fellow-creatures, to occasion or lessen it, being a more important trust, than the power we have of promoting their positive happiness; the former requires and has a further, an additional security and guard against its being violated, beyond and over and above what the latter has. The social nature of man, and general good-will to his species, equally prevent him from doing evil, incline him to relieve the distressed, and to promote the positive happiness of his fellow-creatures; but compassion only restrains from the first, and carries him to the second; it hath nothing to do with the third.

The final causes then of compassion are to prevent and to 3
relieve misery.

As to the former; this affection may plainly be a restraint a
upon resentment, envy, unreasonable self-love; that is, upon all the principles from which men do evil to one another. Let us instance only in resentment. It seldom happens, in regulated societies, that men have an enemy so entirely in their power, as to be able to satiate their resentment with safety. But if we were to put this case, it is plainly supposable, that a person might bring his enemy into such a condition, as from being the object of anger and rage, to become an object of compassion, even to himself, though the most malicious man in the world; and in this case compassion would stop him, if he could stop with safety, from pursuing his revenge any further. But since nature has placed within us more powerful restraints to prevent mischief, and since the final cause of compassion is much more to relieve misery, let us go on to the consideration of it in this view.

As this world was not intended to be a state of any great b
satisfaction or high enjoyment; so neither was it intended

to be a mere scene of unhappiness and sorrow. Mitigations and reliefs are provided by the merciful Author of Nature for most of the afflictions in human life. There is kind provision made even against our frailties; as we are so constituted that time abundantly abates our sorrows, and begets in us that resignment of temper, which ought to have been produced by a better cause; a due sense of the authority of God, and our state of dependence. This holds in respect to far the greatest part of the evils of life; I suppose, in some degree, as to pain and sickness. Now this part of the constitution or make of man, considered as some relief to misery and not as provision for positive happiness, is, if I may so speak, an instance of Nature's compassion for us, and every natural remedy or relief to misery, may be considered in the same view.

But since, in many cases, it is very much in our power to alleviate the miseries of each other, and benevolence, though natural in man to man, yet is in a very low degree, kept down by interest and competitions, and men, for the most part, are so engaged in the business and pleasures of the world, as to overlook and turn away from objects of misery, which are plainly considered as interruptions to them in their way, as intruders upon their business, their gaiety and mirth; compassion is an advocate within us in their behalf, to gain the unhappy admittance and access, to make their case attended to. If it sometimes serves a contrary purpose, and makes men industriously turn away from the miserable, these are only instances of abuse and perversion, for the end, for which the affection was given us, most certainly is not to make us avoid, but to make us attend to the objects of it. And if men would only resolve to allow thus much to it, let it bring before their view, the view of their mind, the miseries of their fellow-creatures, let it gain for them that their case be considered; I am persuaded it would not fail of gaining more, and that very few real objects of charity would pass unrelieved. Pain and sorrow and misery, have a right to our assistance; compassion puts us in mind of the debt, and that we owe it to ourselves, as well as to the distressed. For, to endeavour to get rid of the sorrow of compassion by turning from the wretched, when yet it is in our power to relieve them, is as unnatural, as to endeavour to

get rid of the pain of hunger by keeping from the sight of food. That we can do one with greater success than we can the other, is no proof that one is less a violation of Nature than the other. Compassion is a call, a demand of Nature, to relieve the unhappy, as hunger is a natural call for food. This affection plainly gives the objects of it an additional claim to relief and mercy, over and above what our fellow-creatures in common have to our goodwill. Liberality and bounty are exceedingly commendable, and a particular distinction in such a world as this, where men set themselves to contract their heart, and close it to all interests but their own. It is by no means to be opposed to mercy, but always accompanies it, the distinction between them is only, that the former leads our thoughts to a more promiscuous and undistinguished distribution of favours, to those who are not, as well as those who are necessitous, whereas the object of compassion is misery. But in the comparison, and where there is not a possibility of both, mercy is to have the preference; the affection of compassion manifestly leads us to this preference. Thus, to relieve the indigent and distressed, to single out the unhappy, from whom can be expected no returns, either of present entertainment or future service, for the objects of our favours, to esteem a man's being friendless as a recommendation, dejection, and incapacity of struggling through the world, as a motive for assisting him; in a word, to consider these circumstances of disadvantage, which are usually thought a sufficient reason for neglect and overlooking a person, as a motive for helping him forward; this is the course of benevolence which compassion marks out and directs us to, this is that humanity, which is so peculiarly becoming our nature and circumstances in this world.

To these considerations, drawn from the nature of man, must be added the reason of the thing itself we are recommending, which accords to and shows the same. For since it is so much more in our power to lessen the misery of our fellow-creatures than to promote their positive happiness, in cases where there is an inconsistency, we shall be likely to do much more good by setting ourselves to mitigate the former, than by endeavouring to promote the latter. Let the competition be between the poor and the rich. It is easy,

you will say, to see which will have the preference. True; but the question is, which ought to have the preference? What proportion is there between the happiness produced by doing a favour to the indigent, and that produced by doing the same favour to one in easy circumstances? It is manifest that the addition of a very large estate to one who before had an affluence, will in many instances yield him less new enjoyment or satisfaction than an ordinary charity would yield to a necessitous person. So that it is not only true, that our nature, *i. e.* the voice of God within us, carries us to the exercise of charity and benevolence in the way of compassion or mercy, preferably to any other way; but we also manifestly discern much more good done by the former, or, if you will allow me the expressions, more misery annihilated, and happiness created. If charity and benevolence, and endeavouring to do good to our fellow-creatures, be any thing, this observation deserves to be most seriously considered by all who have to bestow. And it holds with great exactness, when applied to the several degrees of greater and less indigency throughout the various ranks in human life; the happiness or good produced not being in proportion to what is bestowed, but in proportion to this joined with the need there was of it.

It may perhaps be expected that upon this subject notice should be taken of occasions, circumstances, and characters, which seem at once to call forth affections of different sorts. Thus vice may be thought the object both of pity and indignation; folly, of pity and of laughter. How far this is strictly true I shall not inquire, but only observe upon the appearance, how much more human it is to yield and give scope to affections, which are more directly in favour of and friendly towards our fellow-creatures; and that there is plainly much less danger of being led wrong by these than by the other.

But notwithstanding all that has been said in recommendation of compassion, that it is most amiable, most becoming human nature, and most useful to the world, yet it must be owned that every affection, as distinct from a principle of reason, may rise too high, and be beyond its just proportion. And by means of this one carried too far, a man throughout his life is subject to much more uneasiness than belongs to

his share; and in particular instances, it may be in such a degree as to incapacitate him from assisting the very person who is the object of it. But as there are some who upon principle set up for suppressing this affection itself as weakness, there is also I know not what of fashion on this side, and by some means or other the whole world almost is run into the extremes of insensibility towards the distresses of their fellow-creatures; so that general rules and exhortations must always be on the other side.

And now to go on to the uses we should make of the fore- 4
going reflections, the further ones they lead to, and the
general temper they have a tendency to beget in us. There 5
being that distinct affection implanted in the nature of man, tending to lessen the miseries of life, that particular provision made for abating its sorrows more than for increasing its positive happiness, as before explained: this may suggest to us what should be our general aim respecting ourselves, in our passage through this world; namely, to endeavour chiefly to escape misery, keep free from uneasiness, pain, and sorrow, or to get relief and mitigation of them; to propose to ourselves peace and tranquillity of mind, rather than pursue after high enjoyments. This is what the constitution of nature, before explained, marks out as the course we should follow, and the end we should aim at. To make pleasure and mirth and jollity our business, and be constantly hurrying about after some gay amusement, some new gratification of sense or appetite, to those who will consider the nature of man and our condition in this world, will appear the most romantic scheme of life that ever entered into thought: and yet how many are there who go on in this course, without learning better from the daily, the hourly disappointments, listlessness, and satiety which accompany this fashionable method of wasting away their days?

The subject we have been insisting upon would lead us 6
into the same kind of reflections by a different connexion. The miseries of life brought home to ourselves by compassion, viewed through this affection considered as the sense by which they are perceived, would beget in us that moderation, humility, and soberness of mind, which has been now recommended, and which peculiarly belongs to a season of recollection, the only purpose of which is to bring us to a

just sense of things, to recover us out of that forgetfulness of ourselves, and our true state, which it is manifest far the greatest part of men pass their whole life in. Upon this account Solomon says, that "it is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting;" *i. e.* it is more to a man's advantage to turn his eyes towards objects of distress, to recall sometimes to his remembrance the occasions of sorrow, than to pass all his days in thoughtless mirth and gaiety. And he represents the wise as choosing to frequent the former of these places, to be sure not for its own sake, but because "by the sadness of the countenance the heart is made better." Every one observes, how temperate and reasonable men are when humbled and brought low by afflictions, in comparison of what they are in high prosperity. By this voluntary resort to the house of mourning, which is here recommended, we might learn all those useful instructions which calamities teach, without undergoing them ourselves; and grow wiser and better at a more easy rate than men commonly do. The objects themselves, which in that place of sorrow lie before our view, naturally give us a seriousness and attention, check that wantonness which is the growth of prosperity and ease, and lead us to reflect upon the deficiencies of human life itself, that every man at his best estate is altogether vanity. This would correct the florid and gaudy prospects and expectations which we are too apt to indulge, teach us to lower our notions of happiness and enjoyment, bring them down to the reality of things, to what is attainable, to what the frailty of our condition will admit of, which for any continuance is only tranquillity, ease, and moderate satisfactions. Thus we might at once become proof against the temptations with which the whole world almost is carried away; since it is plain that not only what is called a life of pleasure, but also vicious pursuits in general, aim at somewhat besides and beyond these moderate satisfactions.

And as to that obstinacy and wilfulness, which render men so insensible to the motives of religion, this right sense of ourselves and of the world about us would bend the stubborn mind, soften the heart, and make it more apt to receive impressions; and this is the proper temper in which to call our ways to remembrance, to review and set home upon

ourselves the miscarriages of our past life. In such a compliant state of mind reason and conscience will have a fair hearing, which is the preparation for, or rather the beginning of that repentance, the outward show of which we all put on at this season.

Lastly, the various miseries of life which lie before us wherever we turn our eyes, the frailty of this mortal state we are passing through, may put us in mind that the present world is not our home, that we are merely strangers and travellers in it, as all our fathers were; it is, therefore, to be considered as a foreign country, in which our poverty and wants, and the insufficient supplies of them, were designed to turn our views to that higher and better state we are heirs to; a state where will be no follies to be overlooked, no miseries to be pitied, no wants to be relieved; where the affection we have been now treating of will happily be lost, as there will be no objects to exercise it upon, for "God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away."

SERMON VII.

UPON THE CHARACTER OF BALAAM.[1]

NUMBERS xxiii. 10.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.

THESE words, taken alone, and without respect to him who spoke them, lead our thoughts immediately to the different ends of good and bad men; for though the comparison is not expressed, yet it is manifestly implied, as is also the

[[1] Sermons vii. and x., "Upon the Character of Balaam," and "Upon Self-deceit," though on practical subjects, have a close connexion with the other ethical portions of this volume. They illustrate several parts of the 'Analogy,' and some of Butler's views on ethics and on human nature.]

preference of one of these characters to the other in that last circumstance, death: and, since dying the death of the righteous or of the wicked necessarily implies men's being righteous or wicked, *i.e.* having lived righteously or wickedly, a comparison of them in their lives also might come into consideration from such a single view of the words themselves; but my present design is to consider them with a particular reference or respect to him who spoke them, which reference, if you please to attend, you will see; and if what shall be offered to your consideration at this time be thought a discourse upon the whole history of this man, rather than upon the particular words I have read, this is of no consequence; it is sufficient if it afford reflection of use and service to ourselves.

But in order to avoid cavils respecting this remarkable relation in Scripture, either that part of it which you have heard in the first lesson for the day, or any other, let me just observe that, as this is not a place for answering them, so they no way affect the following discourse, since the character there given is plainly a real one in life, and such as there are parallels to.

The occasion of Balaam's coming out of his own country into the land of Moab, where he pronounced this solemn prayer or wish, he himself relates in the first parable or prophetic speech, of which it is the conclusion, in which is a custom referred to proper to be taken notice of, that of devoting enemies to destruction before the entrance upon a war with them. This custom appears to have prevailed over a great part of the world, for we find it amongst the most distant nations. The Romans had public officers, to whom it belonged as a stated part of their office, but there was somewhat more particular in the case now before us, Balaam being looked upon as an extraordinary person, whose blessing or curse was thought to be always effectual.

In order to engage the reader's attention to this passage, the sacred historian has enumerated the preparatory circumstances, which are these. Balaam requires the king of Moab to build him seven altars, and to prepare him the same number of oxen and of rams. The sacrifice being over, he retires alone to a solitude sacred to these occasions, there to wait the Divine inspiration or answer, for which the fore-

going rites were the preparation.[2] And God met Balaam and put a word in his mouth, upon receiving which he returns back to the altars, where was the king, who had all this while attended the sacrifice as appointed, he and all the princes of Moab standing, big with expectation of the prophet's reply.[3] "And he took up his parable, and said, Balak the king of Moab hath brought me from Aram, out of the mountains of the east, saying, Come, curse me Jacob, and come, defy Israel. How shall I curse, whom God hath not cursed? Or how shall I defy, whom the Lord hath not defied? For from the top of the rocks I see him, and from the hills I behold him: lo, the people shall dwell alone, and shall not be reckoned among the nations. Who can count the dust of Jacob, and the number of the fourth part of Israel? Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

It is necessary, as you will see in the progress of this discourse, particularly to observe what he understood by righteous, and he himself is introduced in the book of Micah[4] explaining it, if by righteous is meant good, as to be sure it is. "O my people, remember now what Balak king of Moab consulted, and what Balaam the son of Beor answered him from Shittim unto Gilgal." From the mention of Shittim it is manifest that it is this very story which is here referred to, though another part of it, the account of which is not now extant, as there are many quotations in Scripture out of books which are not come down to us. Remember what Balaam answered, "that ye may know the righteousness of the Lord," *i. e.* the righteousness which God will accept. Balak demands, "Wherewith shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before the high God? Shall I come before him with burnt-offerings, with calves of a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, or with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my first-born for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" Balaam answers him, "He hath showed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?" Here is a good man expressly characterized as distinct from a dishonest and a superstitious man.

[2] Ver. 4, 5. [3] Ver. 6. [4] Micah vi.

ceeded; the people sin against God, and thus the prophet's counsel brought on that destruction, which he could by no means be prevailed upon to assist with the religious ceremony of execration which the king of Moab thought would itself have effected it. Their crime and punishment are related in Deuteronomy[7] and Numbers.[8] And from the relation repeated in Numbers,[9] it appears that Balaam was the contriver of the whole matter. It is also ascribed to him in the Revelation,[10] where he is said to have taught Balak to cast a stumbling block before the children of Israel.

This was the man, this Balaam, I say, was the man who desired to die the death of the righteous, and that his last end might be like his; and this was the state of his mind when he pronounced these words.

So that the object we have now before us is the most astonishing in the world; a very wicked man, under a deep sense of God and religion, persisting still in his wickedness, and preferring the wages of unrighteousness, even when he had before him a lively view of death, and that approaching period of his days, which should deprive him of all those advantages for which he was prostituting himself; and likewise a prospect, whether certain or uncertain, of a future state of retribution. All this joined with an explicit ardent wish, that, when he was to leave this world, he might be in the condition of a righteous man. Good God, what inconsistency, what perplexity is here! With what different views of things, with what contradictory principles of action must such a mind be torn and distracted! It was not unthinking carelessness, by which he ran on headlong in vice and folly, without ever making a stand to ask himself what he was doing; no, he acted upon the cool motives of interest and advantage. Neither was he totally hard and callous to impressions of religion, what we call abandoned, for he absolutely denied to curse Israel. When reason assumes her place, when convinced of his duty, when he owns and feels, and is actually under the influence of the Divine authority, whilst he is carrying on his views to the grave, the end of all temporal greatness; under this sense of things, with the better character and more desirable state, present—full

[7] Chap. iv. [8] Chap. xxv [9] Chap. xxxi. [10] Chap. ii.

before him—in his thoughts, in his wishes, voluntarily to choose the worse. What fatality is here! or how, otherwise, can such a character be explained? And yet, strange as it may appear, it is not altogether an uncommon one; nay, with some small alterations, and put a little lower, it is applicable to a very considerable part of the world. For if the reasonable choice be seen and acknowledged, and yet men make the unreasonable one, is not this the same contradiction, that very inconsistency, which appeared so unaccountable?

To give some little opening to such characters and behaviour, it is to be observed, in general, that there is no account to be given in the way of reason, of men's so strong attachments to the present world; our hopes and fears and pursuits are, in degrees, beyond all proportion to the known value of the things they respect. This may be said without taking into consideration religion and a future state, and when these are considered, the disproportion is infinitely heightened. Now when men go against their reason, and contradict a more important interest at a distance, for one nearer, though of less consideration; if this be the whole of the case, all that can be said is, that strong passions, some kind of brute force within, prevails over the principle of rationality. However, if this be with a clear, full, and distinct view of the truth of things, then it is doing the utmost violence to themselves, acting in the most palpable contradiction to their very nature.[11] But if there be any such thing in mankind, as putting half deceits upon themselves; which there plainly is, either by avoiding reflection, or (if they do reflect) by religious equivocation, subterfuges, and palliating matters to themselves, by these means, conscience may be laid asleep, and they may go on in a course of wickedness with less disturbance. All the various turns, doubles, and intricacies in a dishonest heart, cannot be unfolded or laid open, but that there is somewhat of that kind is manifest, be it to be called self-deceit or by any other name. Balaam had before his eyes the authority of God, absolutely forbidding him what he, for the sake of a reward, had the strongest inclination to; he was likewise in a state of mind sober enough to consider death and his

[11] [See 'Wayland's Sermons;' Sermon on the Fall.]

last end; by these considerations he was restrained, first from going to the king of Moab, and after he did go, from cursing Israel. But notwithstanding this, there was great wickedness in his heart. He could not forego the rewards of unrighteousness; he therefore first seeks for indulgences, and when these could not be obtained, he sins against the whole meaning, end, and design of the prohibition, which no consideration in the world could prevail with him to go against the letter of. And surely that impious counsel, he gave to Balak against the children of Israel, was, considered in itself, a greater piece of wickedness, than if he had cursed them in words.

If it be inquired what his situation, his hopes and fears were, in respect to this his wish; the answer must be, that consciousness of the wickedness of his heart must necessarily have destroyed all settled hopes of dying the death of the righteous; he could have no calm satisfaction in this view of his last end. Yet, on the other hand, it is possible that those partial regards to his duty, now mentioned, might keep him from perfect despair.

Upon the whole, it is manifest that Balaam had the most just and true notions of God and religion, as appears, partly from the original story itself, and more plainly from the passage in Micah, where he explains religion to consist in real virtue and real piety, expressly distinguished from superstition, and in terms which most strongly exclude dishonesty and falseness of heart. Yet you see his behaviour: he seeks indulgences for plain wickedness, which not being able to obtain, he glosses over that same wickedness, dresses it up in a new form, in order to make it pass off more easily with himself; that is, he deliberately contrives to deceive and impose upon himself, in a matter which he knew to be of the utmost importance.

To bring these observations home to ourselves. It is too evident that many persons allow themselves in very unjustifiable courses, who yet make great pretences to religion; not to deceive the world, none can be so weak as to think this will pass in our age, but from principles, hopes, and fears, respecting God and a future state; and go on thus with a sort of tranquillity and quiet of mind. This cannot be upon a thorough consideration and full resolution, that

the pleasures and advantages they propose are to be pursued at all hazards against reason, against the law of God, and though everlasting destruction is to be the consequence. This would be doing too great violence upon themselves. No, they are for making a composition with the Almighty. These of his commands they will obey: but as to others—why they will make all the atonements in their power; the ambitious, the covetous, the dissolute man, each in a way which shall not contradict his respective pursuit. Indulgences before, which was Balaam's first attempt, though he was not so successful in it as to deceive himself, or atonements afterwards, are all the same. And here perhaps come in faint hopes that they may, and half-resolves that they will, one time or other, make a change.

Besides these, there are also persons, who from a more just way of considering things, see the infinite absurdity of this, of substituting sacrifice instead of obedience; there are persons far enough from superstition, and not without some real sense of God and religion upon their minds, who yet are guilty of most unjustifiable practices, and go on with great coolness and command over themselves. The same dishonesty and unsoundness of heart discovers itself in these another way. In all common ordinary cases we see intuitively at first view what is our duty, what is the honest part. This is the ground of the observation, that the first thought is often the best. In these cases doubt and deliberation is itself dishonesty; as it was in Balaam upon the second message. That which is called considering what is our duty in a particular case, is very often nothing but endeavouring to explain it away. Thus those courses, which, if men would fairly attend to the dictates of their own consciences, they would see to be corruption, excess, oppression, uncharitableness; these are refined upon—things were so and so circumstantiated—great difficulties are raised about fixing bounds and degrees: and thus every moral obligation whatever may be evaded. Here is scope, I say, for an unfair mind to explain away every moral obligation to itself.[12] Whether men reflect again upon this internal management and artifice, and how explicit they are with themselves, is another question. There are many operations of the mind, many things pass within,

[12] ['Analogy,' pt. ii. chap. vi. p. 245.]

which we never reflect upon again; which a bystander, from having frequent opportunities of observing us and our conduct, may make shrewd guesses at.

That great numbers are in this way of deceiving themselves is certain. There is scarce a man in the world, who has entirely got over all regards, hopes and fears, concerning God and a future state; and these apprehensions in the generality, bad as we are, prevail in considerable degrees: yet men will and can be wicked with calmness and thought; we see they are. There must therefore be some method of making it sit a little easy upon their minds; which, in the superstitious, is those indulgences and atonements before-mentioned, and this self-deceit of another kind in persons of another character. And both these proceed from a certain unfairness of mind, a peculiar inward dishonesty; the direct contrary to that simplicity which our Saviour recommends, under the notion of becoming little children, as a necessary qualification for our entering into the kingdom of heaven.

But to conclude: how much soever men differ in the course of life they prefer, and in their ways of palliating and excusing their vices to themselves; yet all agree in the one thing, desiring to die the death of the righteous. This is surely remarkable. The observation may be extended further, and put thus: even without determining what that is which we call guilt or innocence, there is no man but would choose, after having had the pleasure or advantage of a vicious action, to be free of the guilt of it, to be in the state of an innocent man. This shows at least the disturbance, and implicit dissatisfaction in vice. If we inquire into the grounds of it, we shall find it proceeds partly from an immediate sense of having done evil;[13] and partly from an apprehension, that this inward sense shall one time or another be seconded by a higher judgment, upon which our whole being depends. Now to suspend and drown this sense, and these apprehensions, be it by the hurry of business or of pleasure, or by superstition, or moral equivocations, this is in a manner one and the same, and makes no alteration at all in the nature of our case. Things and actions are what they are, and the consequences of them will be what they will be: why then should we desire to be deceived? As we are

[13] ['Analogy,' pt. i. chap. iii. p. 61.]

reasonable creatures, and have any regard to ourselves, we ought to lay these things plainly and honestly before our mind, and upon this, act as you please, as you think most fit; make that choice and prefer that course of life which you can justify to yourself, and which sits most easy upon your own mind. It will immediately appear, that vice cannot be the happiness, but must upon the whole be the misery, of such a creature as man; a moral, an accountable agent. Superstitious observances, self-deceit though of a more refined sort, will not in reality at all mend matters with us. And the result of the whole can be nothing else, but that with simplicity and fairness "we keep innocency, and take heed unto the thing that is right; for this alone shall bring a man peace at the last."[14]

SERMON VIII.

UPON RESENTMENT.

[viii. On the use and abuse of resentment.

INTRO. Man's nature is to be judged, not as to whether it is best in the abstract, but on a comparison with his circumstances.

Here, we have to consider the emotion of resentment itself, and the end for which it was given. A common answer erroneous.

1 The nature of the emotion.

It is of two kinds—sudden and deliberate.

a *Sudden* anger is an instinct, excited by violence or harm, not necessarily a *wrong*, and the end of this passion is the resistance or prevention of violence.

b *Deliberate* anger, or resentment, is a passion, excited by *wrong* or injury undeserved. Hence called indignation;

[14] [As announcements of the *gospel*, several of the statements of this sermon are defective: "Peace at the last" is indeed the portion of him who "*keeps* innocency;" but with our race, who have *lost* innocency, the practical question comes to be, how is peace to be regained—and holiness. Both, the gospel teaches, are the fruits of faith: see p. 222.]

which (1) is not malice, and (2) is stronger the more nearly the injury affects ourselves. (3) The sense of wrong is essential to it, as is plain from the circumstances which aggravate the feeling.

2 The end for which the emotion of resentment is implanted: to prevent or remedy injury.

Summary.

3 The abuses of the emotion of resentment.

a Abuses of *sudden* anger: passion; peevishness.

b Abuses of *deliberate* anger: resentment against such as *innocently* injure us; obstinacy in resisting evidence of innocence.

Though liable to abuse, the emotion is important, as a balance against the weakness of pity, and in punishing crime.

Concl. Hence fresh proofs (1) of the reality of virtue, which has certain emotions on its side, and (2) of the wisdom and goodness of God, who makes an instance of them, even the emotion of resentment.]

Matthew v. 43, 44.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

Intro. Since perfect goodness in the Deity is the principle, from whence the universe was brought into being and by which it is preserved: and since general benevolence is the great law of the whole moral creation: it is a question which immediately occurs, why had man implanted in him a principle, which appears the direct contrary to benevolence? Now the foot upon which inquiries of this kind should be treated is this; to take human nature as it is, and the circumstances in which it is placed as they are; and then consider the correspondence between that nature and those circumstances, or what course of action and behaviour, respecting those circumstances, any particular affection or passion leads us to. This I mention to distinguish the matter now before us from disquisitions of quite another kind; namely, why are we not made more perfect creatures,

or placed in better circumstances?[1] These being questions which we have not, that I know of, anything at all to do with. God Almighty undoubtedly foresaw the disorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this state of things. If upon this we set ourselves to search and examine why he did not prevent them; we shall, I am afraid, be in danger of running into somewhat worse than impertinent curiosity. But upon this to examine, how far the nature which he hath given us hath a respect to those circumstances, such as they are; how far it leads us to act a proper part in them; plainly belongs to us: and such inquiries are in many ways of excellent use. Thus the thing to be considered is, not, why we were not made of such a nature, and placed in such circumstances, as to have no need of so harsh and turbulent a passion as resentment but, taking our nature and condition as being what they are, why or for what end such a passion was given us: and this chiefly in order to show, what are the abuses of it.

The persons who laid down for a rule, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy," made short work with this matter. They did not, it seems, perceive anything to be disapproved in hatred, more than in goodwill: and, according to their system of morals, our enemy was the proper natural object of one of these passions, as our neighbour was of the other of them. This was all they had to say, and all they thought needful to be said, upon the subject. But this cannot be satisfactory: because hatred, malice, and revenge, are directly contrary to the religion we profess, and to the nature and reason of the thing itself. Therefore, since no passion God hath endued us with can be in itself evil; and yet since men frequently indulge a passion in such ways and degrees that at length it becomes quite another thing from what it was originally in our nature; and those vices of malice and revenge in particular take their occasion from the natural passion of resentment: it will be needful to trace this up to its original, that we may see, what it is in itself, as placed in our nature by its Author; from which it will plainly appear, for what ends it was placed there. And when we know what the passion is in itself, and the ends of it, we shall easily see, what are the abuses of it, in

[1] [See 'Analogy,' pt. i. chap. v. p. 89.]

which malice and revenge consist and which are so strongly forbidden in the text, by the direct contrary being commanded.

1 Resentment is of two kinds: hasty and sudden, or settled and deliberate.[2] The former is called anger, and often passion; which, though a general word, is frequently appropriated and confined to the particular feeling, sudden anger, as distinct from deliberate resentment, malice and revenge. In all these words is usually implied somewhat vicious; somewhat unreasonable as to the occasion of the passion, or immoderate as to the degree or duration of it. But that the natural passion itself is indifferent, St. Paul has asserted in that precept, "Be ye angry, and sin not:"[3] which though it is by no means to be understood as an encouragement to indulge ourselves in anger, the sense being certainly this, though ye be angry, sin not; yet here is evidently a distinction made, between anger and sin: between the natural passion and sinful anger.

2 Sudden anger upon certain occasions is mere instinct; as merely so, as the disposition to close our eyes upon the apprehension of somewhat falling into them; and no more necessarily implies any degree of reason. I say, necessarily, for to be sure hasty, as well as deliberate, anger may be occasioned by injury or contempt; in which cases reason suggests to our thoughts that injury and contempt, which is the occasion of the passion: but I am speaking of the former only so far as it is to be distinguished from the latter. The only way, in which our reason and understanding can raise anger, is by representing to our mind injustice or injury of some kind or other. Now momentary anger is

[2] ["'One point in Butler's account of resentment has been admired as happy and novel: I mean the distinction between sudden anger and settled resentment. The distinction is of this kind: the former does not imply that we have wrong inflicted on us; the latter does. The former flashes up before we have time to reflect, and resists all violence and harm; the latter glows with a permanent heat against injury and wrong. The former is an instinct implanted for preservation; the latter is a moral sentiment given for the repression of injustice. The former belongs to animals; the latter is peculiar to man.' — *Whewell.*]

[3] Ephes. iv. 26.

frequently raised, not only without any real, but without any apparent reason; that is, without any appearance of injury, as distinct from hurt or pain. It cannot, I suppose, be thought that this passion, in infants; in the lower species of animals; and, which is often seen, in men towards them: it cannot, I say, be imagined that these instances of this passion are the effect of reason: no, they are occasioned by mere sensation and feeling. It is opposition, sudden hurt, violence, which naturally excites the passion: and the real demerit or fault of him who offers that violence, or is the cause of that opposition or hurt, does not in many cases so much as come into thought.

The reason and end for which man was made thus liable to this passion, is, that he might be better qualified to prevent, and likewise (or perhaps chiefly) to resist and defeat, sudden force, violence, and opposition, considered merely as such, and without regard to the fault or demerit of him who is the author of them. Yet, since violence may be considered in this other and further view, as implying fault, and since injury, as distinct from harm, may raise sudden anger; sudden anger may likewise accidentally serve to prevent, or remedy, such fault and injury. But, considered as distinct from settled anger, it stands in our nature for self-defence, and not for the administration of justice. There are plainly cases, and in the uncultivated parts of the world, and, where regular governments are not formed, they frequently happen, in which there is no time for consideration, and yet to be passive is certain destruction; in which, sudden resistance is the only security.

But from this deliberate anger or resentment is essentially b
distinguished, as the latter is not naturally excited by, or intended to prevent mere harm, without appearance of wrong or injustice. Now, in order to see, as exactly as we can, what is the natural object and occasion of such resentment, let us reflect upon the manner in which we are touched with reading, suppose, a feigned story of baseness and villany, properly worked up to move our passions. This immediately raises indignation, somewhat of a desire that it should be punished, and though the designed injury be prevented, yet that it was designed is sufficient to raise this inward feeling. Suppose the story true, this inward

feeling would be as natural and as just, and one may venture
to affirm that there is scarce a man in the world but would
have it upon some occasions. It seems in us plainly con-
nected with a sense of virtue and vice, of moral good and
evil. Suppose, further, we knew both the person who did
and who suffered the injury, neither would this make any
alteration, only that it would probably affect us more. The
1 indignation raised by cruelty and injustice, and the desire of
having it punished, which persons unconcerned would feel,
is by no means malice; no, it is resentment against vice and
wickedness; it is one of the common bonds by which
society is held together, a fellow-feeling which each indivi-
dual has in behalf of the whole species as well as of himself,
and it does not appear that this, generally speaking, is at all
too high amongst mankind. Suppose now the injury I have
been speaking of to be done against ourselves, or those whom
2 we consider as ourselves, it is plain the way in which we
should be affected would be exactly the same in kind, but it
would certainly be in a higher degree and less transient,
because a sense of our own happiness and misery is most
intimately and always present to us, and from the very con-
stitution of our nature we cannot but have a greater sensi-
bility to, and be more deeply interested in, what concerns
ourselves; and this seems to be the whole of this passion,
which is, properly speaking, natural to mankind, namely, a
resentment against injury and wickedness in general, and in
a higher degree when towards ourselves, in proportion to
the greater regard which men naturally have for themselves
than for others. From hence it appears that it is not
natural, but moral evil; it is not suffering, but injury
which raises that anger or resentment which is of any con-
tinuance. The natural object of it is not one who appears
to the suffering person to have been only the innocent occa-
sion of his pain or loss, but one who has been, in a moral
3 sense, injurious either to ourselves or others. This is abund-
antly confirmed by observing what it is which heightens
or lessens resentment, namely, the same which aggravates or
lessens the fault, friendship and former obligations on one
hand, or inadvertency, strong temptations, and mistake on
the other. All this is so much understood by mankind, how
little soever it be reflected upon, that a person would be

reckoned quite distracted who should coolly resent a harm which had not to himself the appearance of injury or wrong. Men do indeed resent what is occasioned through carelessness, but then they expect observance as their due, and so that carelessness is considered as faulty. It is likewise true that they resent more strongly an injury done than one which, though designed, was prevented, in cases where the guilt is perhaps the same; the reason, however, is not that bare pain or loss raises resentment, but that it gives a new, and, as I may speak, additional sense of the injury or injustice. According to the natural course of the passions, the degrees of resentment are in proportion, not only to the degree of design and deliberation in the injurious person, but in proportion to this, joined with the degree of the evil designed or premeditated, since this likewise comes in to make the injustice greater or less; and the evil or harm will appear greater when they feel it than when they only reflect upon it, so therefore will the injury, and consequently the resentment will be greater.

The natural object or occasion of settled resentment then 2
being injury, as distinct from pain or loss, it is easy to see that to prevent and to remedy such injury, and the miseries arising from it, is the end for which this passion was implanted in man. It is to be considered as a weapon, put into our hands by Nature, against injury, injustice, and cruelty; how it may be innocently employed and made use of shall presently be mentioned.

The account which has been now given of this passion, is, Summa.
in brief, that sudden anger is raised by, and was chiefly intended to prevent or remedy, mere harm distinct from injury;[4] but that it may be raised by injury, and may serve to prevent or to remedy it, and then the occasions and effects of it are the same with the occasions and effects of deliberate anger, but they are essentially distinguished in this, that the latter is never occasioned by harm distinct from injury, and its natural proper end is to remedy or prevent only that harm which implies, or is supposed to

[4] [This distinction between "harm" and "injury"—the latter involving a censure on an act as having a bad moral quality—is recognised by most moralists.—Whewell's 'Elements of Morality,' i, p. 41; Wayland's 'Moral Science, p. 31.]

imply, injury or moral wrong. Every one sees that these observations do not relate to those who have habitually suppressed the course of their passions and affections out of regard either to interest or virtue, or who, from habits of vice and folly, have changed their nature; but I suppose there can be no doubt but this now described is the general course of resentment, considered as a natural passion, neither increased by indulgence nor corrected by virtue, nor prevailed over by other passions or particular habits of life.

3 As to the abuses of anger, which it is to be observed may
a be in all different degrees, the first which occurs is what is commonly called passion, to which some men are liable, in the same way as others are to the epilepsy, or any sudden particular disorder. This distemper of the mind seizes them upon the least occasion in the world, and perpetually without any real reason at all, and by means of it they are plainly every day, every waking hour of their lives, liable and in danger of running into the most extravagant outrages. Of a less boisterous, but not of a less innocent kind, is peevishness, which I mention with pity, with real pity, to the unhappy creatures who, from their inferior station, or other circumstances and relations, are obliged to be in the way of, and to serve for a supply to it. Both these, for aught, that I can see, are one and the same principle, but as it takes root in minds of different makes, it appears differently, and so is come to be distinguished by different names. That which in a more feeble temper is peevishness, and languidly discharges itself upon everything which comes in its way, the same principle, in a temper of greater force and stronger passions, becomes rage and fury. In one the humour discharges itself at once, in the other it is continually discharging. This is the account of passion and peevishness, as distinct from each other, and appearing in different persons; it is no objection against the truth of it that they are both to be seen sometimes in one and the same person.

b With respect to deliberate resentment, the chief instances of abuse are, when from partiality to ourselves we imagine an injury done us when there is none; when this partiality represents it to us greater than it really is; when we fall into that extravagant and monstrous kind of resentment

towards one who has innocently been the occasion of evil to us, that is, resentment upon account of pain or inconvenience without injury, which is the same absurdity as settled anger at a thing that is inanimate; when the indignation against injury and injustice rises too high, and is beyond proportion to the particular ill action it is exercised upon; or, lastly, when pain or harm of any kind is inflicted merely in consequence of, and to gratify that resentment, though naturally raised.

It would be endless to descend into and explain all the peculiarities of perverseness and wayward humour which might be traced up to this passion; but there is one thing which so generally belongs to and accompanies all excess and abuse of it, as to require being mentioned—a certain determination and resolute bent of mind not to be convinced or set right, though it be ever so plain that there is no reason for the displeasure, that it was raised merely by error or misunderstanding. In this there is doubtless a great mixture of pride, but there is somewhat more, which I cannot otherwise express than that resentment has taken possession of the temper and of the mind and will not quit its hold. It would be too minute to inquire whether this be anything more than bare obstinacy; it is sufficient to observe that it, in a very particular manner and degree, belongs to the abuses of this passion.

But notwithstanding all these abuses, "is not just indignation against cruelty and wrong one of the instruments of death which the Author of our nature hath provided? Are not cruelty, injustice, and wrong the natural objects of that indignation? Surely then it may one way or other be innocently employed against them." True; since, therefore, it is necessary for the very subsistence of the world that injury, injustice, and cruelty should be punished, and since compassion, which is so natural to mankind, would render that execution of justice exceedingly difficult and uneasy, indignation against vice and wickedness is, and may be allowed to be, a balance to that weakness of pity, and also to anything else which would prevent the necessary methods of severity. Those who have never thought upon those subjects may perhaps not see the weight of this, but let us suppose a person guilty of murder or any other

action of cruelty, and that mankind had naturally no indignation against such wickedness and the authors of it, but that everybody was affected towards such a criminal in the same way as towards an innocent man, compassion, amongst other things, would render the execution of justice exceedingly painful and difficult, and would often quite prevent it, and notwithstanding that the principle of benevolence is denied by some, and is really in a very low degree, that men are in great measure insensible to the happiness of their fellow-creatures, yet they are not insensible to their misery, but are very strongly moved with it, insomuch that there plainly is occasion for that feeling which is raised by guilt and demerit as a balance to that of compassion. Thus much may, I think, justly be allowed to resentment in the strictest way of moral consideration.

The good influence which this passion has in fact upon the affairs of the world is obvious to every one's notice. Men are plainly restrained from injuring their fellow-creatures by fear of their resentment, and it is very happy that they are so, when they would not be restrained by a principle of virtue: and after an injury is done, and there is a necessity that the offender should be brought to justice, the cool consideration of reason that the security and peace of society requires examples of justice should be made, might indeed be sufficient to procure laws to be enacted and sentence passed; but is it that cool reflection in the injured person which, for the most part, brings the offended to justice? or is it not resentment and indignation against the injury and the author of it? I am afraid there is no doubt which is commonly the case. This, however, is to be considered as a good effect, notwithstanding it were much to be wished that men would act from a better principle, reason and cool reflection.

ᴶNCL. The account now given of the passion of resentment, as distinct from all the abuses of it, may suggest to our thoughts the following reflections.

1 First. That vice is indeed of ill-desert, and must finally be punished. Why should men dispute concerning the reality of virtue, and whether it be founded in the nature of things which yet surely is not matter of question; but why should this, I say, be disputed, when every man carries about him

this passion, which affords him demonstration that the rules of justice and equity are to be the guide of his actions? For every man naturally feels an indignation upon seeing instances of villany and baseness, and therefore cannot commit the same without being self-condemned.

Secondly. That we should learn to be cautious lest we charge God foolishly, by ascribing that to him, or the nature he has given us, which is owing wholly to our own abuse of it. Men may speak of the degeneracy and corruption of the world, according to the experience they have had of it, but human nature, considered as the Divine workmanship, should methinks be treated as sacred; for in the image of God made he man. That passion, from whence men take occasion to run into the dreadful vices of malice and revenge; even that passion, as implanted in our nature by God, is not only innocent but a generous movement of mind.[5] It is in itself, and in its original, no more than indignation against injury and wickedness; that which is the only deformity in the creation, and the only reasonable object of abhorrence and dislike. How manifold evidence have we of the Divine wisdom and goodness, when even pain in the natural world, and the passion we have been now considering in the moral, come out instances of it!

SERMON IX.

UPON FORGIVENESS OF INJURIES.

[On the limits of resentment: or on the forgiveness of injuries.

INTRO. There are several affections in man appropriate to a state of disorder and imperfection: Resentment is one of these, and natural. The duty of forgiveness does not forbid resentment, but the excess or abuse of it.

[Resentment in man answers, it will be noticed, to "wrath" in God. The latter is not passionateness, or implacableness, as some have supposed; it is the *moral sentiment* with which a holy being cannot but regard iniquity.]

1 Such resentment in excess (retaliation or revenge) is wrong; for

a (First) anger produces anger; revenge, malice, and that without limit: an aggravation of misery.

b (Secondly) such resentment is a painful remedy to him who suffers from it, and, if not a remedy, it becomes an unmixed evil: The gratification of this passion is never innocent, except when necessary.

Proved from two cases, 1, 2.

2 Love to our enemies is a duty; for it is part of the law of general benevolence, which however admits resentment, though not the abuses of it.

This is clear from the following considerations:

a Resentment is consistent with goodwill.

b Which goodwill is not destroyed by any vice in the object of it; not even when vice exists in the highest degree; nor when we ourselves suffer by it. So all allow who are not swayed by self-partiality.

Therefore, to love our enemies is not rant, unless benevolence is so; but is as reasonable as the opposite is mischievous.

3 Reflections adapted to beget and strengthen the temper approved above.

a Self-love is apt to magnify things amiss in others and lessen things amiss in ourselves: Beware of yielding to it.

b So is anger.

c Moderation, therefore, is only common sense, trying to ascertain the truth; and is perfectly reasonable.

d The origin of wrong done us is not generally malice, but some passion in itself, and within proper limits allowable.

e The object of our resentment is himself a sufferer, and therefore, a fit object of compassion.

f We ourselves need forgiveness; and a forgiving disposition is essential to it.]

MATTHEW v. 43, 44.

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you.

INTRO. As God Almighty foresaw the irregularities and disorders, both natural and moral, which would happen in this state of

things, he hath graciously made some provision against them, by giving us several passions and affections, which arise from or whose objects are those disorders. Of this sort are fear, resentment, compassion, and others; of which there could be no occasion or use in a perfect state; but in the present we should be exposed to greater inconveniences without them, though there are very considerable ones, which they themselves are the occasions of. They are incumbrances indeed, but such as we are obliged to carry about with us through this various journey of life; some of them as a guard against the violent assaults of others, and in our own defence; some in behalf of others; and all of them to put us upon and help to carry us through a course of behaviour suitable to our condition, in default of that perfection of wisdom and virtue which would be in all respects our better security.

The passion of anger or resentment hath already been 1
largely treated of. It hath been shown that mankind naturally feel some emotion of mind against injury and injustice, whoever are the sufferers by it, and even though the injurious design be prevented from taking effect. Let this be called anger, indignation, resentment, or by whatever name any one shall choose, the thing itself is understood and is plainly natural. It has likewise been observed that this natural indignation is generally moderate and low enough in mankind, in each particular man, when the injury which excites it doth not affect himself, or one whom he considers as himself. Therefore the precepts to forgive, and to love our enemies, do not relate to that general indignation against injury and the authors of it, but to this feeling or resentment when raised by private or personal injury: but no man could be thought in earnest who should assert that, though indignation against injury when others are the sufferers, is innocent and just, yet the same indignation against it, when we ourselves are the sufferers, becomes faulty and blamable. These precepts therefore cannot be understood to forbid this in the latter case, more than in the former: nay, they cannot be understood to forbid this feeling in the latter case, though raised to a higher degree than in the former; because, as was also observed further, from the very constitution of our nature, we cannot but have a greater sensibility to what

concerns ourselves: therefore the precepts in the text, and others of the like import with them, must be understood to forbid only the excess and abuse of this natural feeling, in cases of personal and private injury: the chief instances of which excess and abuse have likewise been already remarked, and all of them, excepting that of retaliation, do so plainly in the very terms express somewhat unreasonable, disproportionate, and absurd, as to admit of no pretence or shadow of justification.

But since custom and false honour are on the side of retaliation and revenge when the resentment is natural and just, and reasons are sometimes offered in justification of revenge in these cases; and since love of our enemies is thought too hard a saying to be obeyed; I will show the absolute unlawfulness of the former, the obligations we are under to the latter; and then proceed to some reflections, which may have a more direct and immediate tendency to beget in us a right temper of mind towards those who have offended us.

In showing the unlawfulness of revenge, it is not my present design to examine what is alleged in favour of it, from the tyranny of custom and false honour, but only to consider the nature and reason of the thing itself, which ought to have prevented and ought now to extirpate everything of that kind.

First. Let us begin with the supposition of that being innocent, which is pleaded for, and which shall be shown to be altogether vicious, the supposition that we were allowed to render evil for evil, and see what would be the consequence. Malice or resentment towards any man hath plainly a tendency to beget the same passion in him who is the object of it, and this again increases it in the other. It is of the very nature of this vice to propagate itself, not only by way of example, which it does in common with other vices, but in a peculiar way of its own; for resentment itself, as well as what is done in consequence of it, is the object of resentment: hence it comes to pass that the first offence, even when so slight as presently to be dropped and forgotten, becomes the occasion of entering into a long intercourse of ill offices; neither is it at all uncommon to see persons, in this progress of strife and variance, change parts; and him,

who was at first the injured person, become more injurious and blamable than the aggressor. Put the case then, that the law of retaliation was universally received and allowed, as an innocent rule of life, by all; and the observance of it thought by many (and then it would soon come to be thought by all) a point of honour; this supposes every man in private cases to pass sentence in his own cause, and likewise that anger or resentment is to be the judge. Thus, from the numberless partialities which we all have for ourselves, every one would often think himself injured when he was not; and in most cases would represent an injury as much greater than it really is; the imagined dignity of the person offended would scarce ever fail to magnify the offence. And if bare retaliation, or returning just the mischief received, always begets resentment in the person upon whom we retaliate, what would that excess do? Add to this, that he likewise has his partialities—there is no going on to represent this scene of rage and madness; it is manifest there would be no bounds nor any end. If the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water, what would it come to when allowed this free and unrestrained course? As coals are to burning coals, or wood to fire; so would these contentious men be to kindle strife. And since the indulgence of revenge hath manifestly this tendency, and does actually produce these effects in proportion as it is allowed; a passion of so dangerous a nature ought not to be indulged, were there no other reason against it.

Secondly, It hath been shown that the passion of resentment was placed in man, upon supposition of, and as a prevention or remedy to, irregularity and disorder. Now whether it be allowed or not, that the passion itself and the gratification of it joined together are painful to the malicious person; it must however be so with respect to the person towards whom it is exercised, and upon whom the revenge is taken. Now, if we consider mankind, according to that fine allusion of St. Paul, as one body, and every one members one of another; it must be allowed that resentment is, with respect to society, a painful remedy. Thus then the very notion or idea of this passion, as a remedy or prevention of evil, and as in itself a painful means, plainly shows that it

ought never to be made use of, but only in order to produce some greater good.

It is to be observed, that this argument is not founded upon an allusion or simile; but that it is drawn from the very nature of the passion itself, and the end for which it was given us. We are obliged to make use of words taken from sensible things, to explain what is the most remote from them: and every one sees, from whence the words prevention and remedy are taken. But if you please, let these words be dropped: the thing itself, I suppose, may be expressed without them.

That mankind is a community, that we all stand in a relation to each other, that there is a public end and interest of society which each particular is obliged to promote, is the sum of morals. Consider then the passion of resentment, as given to this one body, as given to society. Nothing can be more manifest, than that resentment is to be considered as a secondary passion, placed in us upon supposition, upon account of, and with regard to injury; not, to be sure, to promote and further it, but to render it, and the inconveniences and miseries arising from it, less and fewer than they would be without this passion. It is as manifest, that the indulgence of it is, with regard to society, a painful means of obtaining these ends. Considered in itself, it is very undesirable, and what society must very much wish to be without. It is in every instance absolutely an evil in itself; because it implies producing misery: and consequently must never be indulged or gratified for itself, by any one who considers mankind as a community or family, and himself as a member of it.

Let us now take this in another view. Every natural appetite, passion and affection, may be gratified in particular instances, without being subservient to the particular chief end, for which these several principles were respectively implanted in our nature. And, if neither this end, nor any other moral obligation be contradicted, such gratification is innocent. Thus, I suppose, there are cases in which each of these principles, this one of resentment excepted, may innocently be gratified, without being subservient to what is the main end of it: that is, though it does not conduce to, yet it may be gratified without contradicting that end, or any other

obligation. But the gratification of the resentment, if it be not conducive to the end for which it was given us, must necessarily contradict, not only the general obligation to benevolence, but likewise that particular end itself. The end, for which it was given, is to prevent or remedy injury; *i. e.* the misery occasioned by injury; *i. e.* misery itself: and the gratification of it consists in producing misery; *i. e.* in contradicting the end, for which it was implanted in our nature.

This whole reasoning is built upon the difference there is between this passion and all others. No other principle, or passion, hath for its end the misery of our fellow-creatures. But malice and revenge meditates evil itself; and to do mischief, to be the author of misery, is the very thing which gratifies the passion: this is what it directly tends towards, as its proper design. Other vices eventually do mischief: this alone aims at it as an end.

Nothing can with reason be urged in justification of revenge, from the good effects which the indulgence of it were before mentioned[1] to have upon the affairs of the world; because, though it be a remarkable instance of the wisdom of Providence to bring good out of evil, yet vice is vice to him who is guilty of it. "But suppose these good effects are foreseen:" that is, suppose reason in a particular case leads a man the same way as passion? Why then, to be sure, he should follow his reason, in this as well as in all other cases. So that, turn the matter which way ever you will, no more can be allowed to this passion, than that hath been already.[2]

As to that love of our enemies, which is commanded; this 2
supposes the general obligation to benevolence or good-will towards mankind: and this being supposed, that precept is no more than to forgive injuries; that is, to keep clear of those abuses before-mentioned: because that we have the habitual temper of benevolence, is taken for granted.

Resentment is not inconsistent with good-will: for we often see both together in very high degrees; not only in parents towards their children, but in cases of friendship and dependence, where there is no natural relation. These contrary passions, though they may lessen, do not neces-

[1] Sermon VIII. p. 442. [2] Sermon VIII. p. 441, 442

sarily destroy each other. We may therefore love our enemy, and yet have resentment against him for his injurious behaviour towards us. But when this resentment entirely destroys our natural benevolence towards him, it is excessive, and becomes malice or revenge. The command, to prevent its having this effect, *i. e.* to forgive injuries, is the same as to love our enemies; because that love is always supposed, unless destroyed by resentment.

"But though mankind is the natural object of benevolence, yet may it not be lessened upon vice, *i. e.* injury?" Allowed: But if every degree of vice or injury must destroy that benevolence, then no man is the object of our love; for no man is without faults.

"But if lower instances of injury may lessen our benevolence, why may not higher, or the highest, destroy it?" The answer is obvious. It is not man's being a social creature, much less his being a moral agent, from whence alone our obligations to goodwill towards him arise. There is an obligation to it prior to either of these, arising from his being a sensible creature; that is, capable of happiness or misery. Now this obligation cannot be superseded by his moral character. What justifies public executions is, not that the guilt or demerit of the criminal dispenses with the obligation of goodwill, neither would this justify any severity; but, that his life is inconsistent with the quiet and happiness of the world: that is, a general and more enlarged obligation necessarily destroys a particular and more confined one of the same kind, inconsistent with it. Guilt or injury then does not dispense with or supersede the duty of love and good-will.

Neither does that peculiar regard to ourselves, which was before allowed to be natural[a] to mankind, dispense with it, because that can no way innocently heighten our resentment against those who have been injurious to ourselves in particular, any otherwise than as it heightens our sense of the injury or guilt; and guilt, though in the highest degree, does not, as hath been shown, dispense with or supersede the duty of love and good-will.

If all this be true, what can a man say, who will dispute the reasonableness, or the possibility of obeying the Divine

[a] Sermon VIII. p. 438.

precept we are now considering? Let him speak out, and it must be thus he will speak, "Mankind, *i. e.* a creature defective and faulty, is the proper object of good-will, whatever his faults are, when they respect others, but not when they respect me myself." That men should be affected in this manner, and act accordingly, is to be accounted for like other vices, but to assert that it ought, and must be thus, is self-partiality possessed of the very understanding.

Thus love to our enemies, and those who have been injurious to us, is so far from being a rant, as it has been profanely called, that it is in truth the law of our nature, and what every one must see and own, who is not quite blinded with self-love.

From hence it is easy to see, what is the degree in which we are commanded to love our enemies, or those who have been injurious to us. It were well if it could as easily be reduced to practice. It cannot be imagined, that we are required to love them with any peculiar kind of affection. But suppose the person injured to have a due, natural sense of the injury, and no more, he ought to be affected towards the injurious person in the same way any good men, uninterested in the case, would be, if they had the same just sense, which we have supposed the injured person to have, of the fault, after which there will yet remain real good-will towards the offender.

Now what is there in all this, which should be thought impracticable? I am sure there is nothing in it unreasonable. It is indeed no more than that we should not indulge a passion, which, if generally indulged, would propagate itself so as almost to lay waste the world; that we should suppress that partial, that false self-love, which is the weakness of our nature, that uneasiness and misery should not be produced, without any good purpose to be served by it, and that we should not be affected towards persons differently from what their nature and character require.

But since to be convinced that any temper of mind, and 3
course of behaviour, is our duty, and the contrary vicious, hath but a distant influence upon our temper and actions; let me add some few reflections, which may have a more direct tendency to subdue those vices in the heart, to beget in us this right temper, and lead us to a right behaviour

towards those who have offended us; which reflections however shall be such as will further show the obligations we are under to it.

No one, I suppose, would choose to have an indignity put upon him, or to be injuriously treated. If then there be any probability of a misunderstanding in the case, either from our imagining we are injured when we are not, or representing the injury to ourselves as greater than it really is; one would hope an intimation of this sort might be kindly received, and that people would be glad to find the injury not so great as they imagined. Therefore, without knowing particulars, I take upon me to assure all persons who think they have received indignities or injurious treatment, that they may depend upon it, as in a manner certain, that the offence is not so great as they themselves imagine. We are in such a peculiar situation, with respect to injuries done to ourselves, that we can scarce any more see them as they really are, than our eye can see itself. If we could place ourselves at a due distance, *i. e.* be really unprejudiced, we should frequently discern that to be in reality inadvertence and mistake in our enemy, which we now fancy we see to be malice or scorn. From this proper point of view, we should likewise in all probability see something of these latter in ourselves, and most certainly a great deal of the former. Thus the indignity or injury would almost infinitely lessen, and perhaps at last come out to be nothing at all. Self-love is a medium of a peculiar kind—in these cases it magnifies everything which is amiss in others, at the same time that it lessens everything amiss in ourselves.

Anger also or hatred may be considered as another false medium of viewing things, which always represents characters and actions much worse than they really are. Ill-will not only never speaks, but never thinks well, of the person towards whom it is exercised. Thus, in cases of offence and enmity, the whole character and behaviour is considered with an eye to that particular part which has offended us, and the whole man appears monstrous, without anything right or human in him, whereas the resentment should surely at least be confined to that particular part of behaviour which gave offence, since the other parts of a man's life and character stand just the same as they did before.

In general, there are very few instances of enmity carried to any length, but that inadvertency, misunderstanding, some real mistake of the case, onone side however, if not on both, has a great share in it.

If these things were attended to, these ill-humours could not be carried to any length amongst good men, and they would be exceedingly abated amongst all. And one would hope they might be attended to, for all that these cautions come to, is really no more than desiring, that things may be considered and judged of as they are in themselves, that we should have an eye to, and beware of, what would otherwise lead us into mistakes. So that to make allowances for inadvertence, misunderstanding, for the partialities of self-love, and the false light which anger sets things in; I say, to make allowances for these, is not to be spoken of as an instance of humbleness of mind, or meekness and moderation of temper, but as what common sense should suggest, to avoid judging wrong of a matter before us, though virtue and morals were out of the case. And therefore it as much belongs to ill men, who will indulge the vice I have been arguing against, as to good men, who endeavour to subdue it in themselves. In a word, all these cautions, concerning anger and self-love, are no more than desiring a man, who was looking through a glass which either magnified or lessened, to take notice, that the objects are not in themselves what they appear through that medium.

To all these things one might add, that, resentment being out of the case, there is not properly speaking any such thing as direct ill-will in one man towards another: therefore the first indignity or injury, if it be not owing to inadvertence or misunderstanding, may however be resolved into other particular passions or self-love; principles quite distinct from ill-will, and which we ought all to be disposed to excuse in others, from experiencing so much of them in ourselves. A great man of antiquity is reported to have said, that, as he never was indulgent to any one fault in himself, he could not excuse those of others. This sentence could scarce with decency come out of the mouth of any human creature. But if we invert the former part, and put it thus: that he was indulgent to many faults in himself, as it is to be feared the best of us are, and yet was implacable; how

monstrous would such an assertion appear? And this is the case in respect to every human creature, in proportion as he is without the forgiving spirit I have been recommending.

Further, though injury, injustice, oppression, the baseness of ingratitude, are the natural objects of indignation, or if you please of resentment, as before explained; yet they are likewise the objects of compassion, as they are their own punishment, and without repentance will for ever be so. No one ever did a designed injury to another, but at the same time he did a much greater to himself. If therefore we would consider things justly, such an one is, according to the natural course of our affections, an object of compassion, as well as of displeasure: and to be affected really in this manner, I say really, in opposition to show and pretence, argues the true greatness of mind. We have an example of forgiveness in this way in its utmost perfection, and which indeed includes in it all that is good, in that prayer of our blessed Saviour on the cross: "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

But lastly, the offences which we are all guilty of against God, and the injuries which men do to each other, are often mentioned together: and, making allowances for the infinite distance between the majesty of Heaven, and a frail mortal, and likewise for this, that he cannot possibly be affected or moved as we are; offences committed by others against ourselves, and the manner in which we are apt to be affected with them, give a real occasion for calling to mind our own sins against God. Now there is an apprehension and presentiment, natural to mankind, that we ourselves shall one time or other be dealt with, as we deal with others; and a peculiar acquiescence in, and feeling of the equity and justice of this equal distribution. This natural notion of equity the son of Sirach has put in the strongest way.[4] "He that revengeth shall find vengeance from the Lord, and he will surely keep his sins in remembrance. Forgive thy neighbour the hurt he hath done unto thee, so shall thy sins also be forgiven when thou prayest. One man beareth hatred against another, and doth he seek pardon from the Lord? He showeth no mercy to a man which is like himself; and doth he ask forgiveness of his own sins?" Let any one read

[4] Ecclus. xxviii. 1-4.

our Saviour's parable of the king who took account of his servants;[5] and the equity and rightness of the sentence, which was passed upon him who was unmerciful to his fellow-servant, will be felt. There is somewhat in human nature, which accords to, and falls in with that method of determination. Let us then place before our eyes the time which is represented in the parable; that of our own death, or the final judgment. Suppose yourselves under the apprehensions of approaching death; that you were just going to appear naked and without disguise before the Judge of all the earth, to give an account of your behaviour towards your fellow-creatures: could anything raise more dreadful apprehensions of that judgment, than the reflection that you had been implacable, and without mercy towards those who had offended you: without that forgiving spirit towards others, which that it may now be exercised towards yourselves, is your only hope? And these natural apprehensions are authorized by our Saviour's application of the parable: "So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses."[5] On the other hand, suppose a good man in the same circumstance, in the last part and close of life; conscious of many frailties, as the best are, but conscious too that he had been meek, forgiving, and merciful; that he had in simplicity of heart been ready to pass over offences against himself: the having felt this good spirit will give him, not only a full view of the amiableness of it, but the surest hope that he shall meet with it in his Judge. This likewise is confirmed by his own declaration: "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you."[5] And that we might have a constant sense of it upon our mind, the condition is expressed in our daily prayer. A forgiving spirit is therefore absolutely necessary, as ever we hope for pardon of our sins; as ever we hope for peace of mind in our dying moments, or for the Divine mercy at that day when we shall most stand in need of it.

[5] Matt. xviii.

SERMON X.

UPON SELF-DECEIT.

2 Samuel xii. 7.

And Nathan said to David, Thou art the man.

These words are the application of Nathan's parable to David, upon occasion of his adultery with Bathsheba, and the murder of Uriah her husband. The parable, which is related in the most beautiful simplicity, is this.[1] "There were two men in one city; the one rich, and the other poor. The rich man had exceeding many flocks and herds; but the poor man had nothing, save one little ewe lamb, which he had bought and nourished up: and it grew up together with him, and with his children; it did eat of his own meat, and drank of his own cup, and lay in his bosom, and was unto him as a daughter. And there came a traveller unto the rich man, and he spared to take of his own flock, and of his own herd, to dress for the way-faring man that was come unto him; but took the poor man's lamb, and dressed it for the man that was come to him. And David's anger was greatly kindled against the man, and he said to Nathan, As the Lord liveth, the man that hath done this thing shall surely die. And he shall restore the lamb four-fold, because he did this thing, and because he had no pity." David passes sentence, not only that there should be a four-fold restitution made; but he proceeds to the rigour of justice, the man that hath done this thing shall die. And this judgment is pronounced with the utmost indignation against such an act of inhumanity, "As the Lord liveth, he shall surely die;" and his anger was greatly kindled against the man. And the prophet answered, "Thou art the man." He had been guilty of much greater inhumanity, with the utmost deliberation, thought, and contrivance. Near a year must have passed, between the time of the commission of his crimes, and the time of the prophet's coming to him; and it does not appear from the story, that he had in all this while the least remorse or contrition.

[1] Ver. 1.

There is not anything relating to men and characters more surprising and unaccountable than this partiality to themselves, which is observable in many, as there is nothing of more melancholy reflection respecting morality, virtue, and religion. Hence it is that many men seem perfect strangers to their own characters. They think, and reason, and judge quite differently upon any matter relating to themselves from what they do in cases of others where they are not interested; hence it is one hears people exposing follies which they themselves are eminent for, and talking with great severity against particular vices, which, if all the world be not mistaken, they themselves are notoriously guilty of. This self-ignorance and self-partiality may be in all different degrees; it is a lower degree of it which David himself refers to in these words, "Who can tell how oft he offendeth? Cleanse thou me from my secret faults." This is the ground of that advice of Elihu to Job, "Surely it is meet to be said unto God, that which I see not teach thou me: if I have done iniquity, I will do no more." And Solomon saw this thing in a very strong light, when he said, "He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool." This likewise was the reason why that precept, "know thyself," was so frequently inculcated by the philosophers of old, for if it were not for that partial and fond regard to ourselves, it would certainly be no great difficulty to know our own character, what passes within, the bent and bias of our mind, much less would there be any difficulty in judging rightly of our own actions; but from this partiality it frequently comes to pass that the observation, of many men's being themselves last of all acquainted with what falls out in their own families, may be applied to a nearer home—to what passes within their own breasts.

There is plainly, in the generality of mankind, an absence of doubt or distrust, in a very great measure, as to their moral character and behaviour, and likewise a disposition to take for granted that all is right and well with them in these respects. The former is owing to their not reflecting, not exercising their judgment upon themselves, the latter to self-love. I am not speaking of that extravagance which is sometimes to be met with, instances of persons declaring in words at length that they never were in the wrong, nor had

ever any diffidence to the justness of their conduct in their whole lives. No, these people are too far gone to have anything said to them. The thing before us is indeed of this kind, but in a lower degree, and confined to the moral character, somewhat of which we almost all of us have without reflecting upon it. Now consider how long, and how grossly, a person of the best understanding might be imposed upon by one of whom he had not any suspicion, and in whom he placed an entire confidence, especially if there were friendship and real kindness in the case; surely this holds even stronger with respect to that self we are all so fond of. Hence arises in men a disregard of reproof and instruction, rules of conduct and moral discipline, which occasionally come in their way; a disregard, I say, of these, not in every respect, but in this single one, namely, as what may be of service to them in particular towards mending their own hearts and tempers and making them better men. It never in earnest comes into their thoughts whether such admonitions may not relate and be of service to themselves, and this quite distinct from a positive persuasion to the contrary, a persuasion from reflection that they are innocent and blameless in those respects. Thus we may invert the observation which is somewhere made upon Brutus, that he never read but in order to make himself a better man. It scarce comes into the thoughts of the generality of mankind that this use is to be made of moral reflections which they meet with; that this use, I say, is to be made of them by themselves, for everybody observes and wonders that it is not done by others.

Further, there are instances of persons having so fixed and steady an eye upon their own interest, whatever they place it in, and the interest of those whom they consider as themselves, as in a manner to regard nothing else; their views are almost confined to this alone. Now we cannot be acquainted with, or in any propriety of speech be said to know anything but what we attend to; if, therefore, they attend only to one side, they really will not, cannot see or know what is to be alleged on the other. Though a man hath the best eyes in the world he cannot see any way but that which he turns them. Thus these persons, without passing over the least, the most minute thing which can-

possibly be urged in favour of themselves, shall overlook entirely the plainest and most obvious things on the other side, and whilst they are under the power of this temper, thought and consideration upon the matter before them has scarce any tendency to set them right, because they are engaged, and their deliberation concerning an action to be done, or reflection upon it afterwards, is not to see whether it be right, but to find out reasons to justify or palliate it; palliate it, not to others, but to themselves.

In some there is to be observed a general ignorance of themselves and wrong way of thinking and judging in everything relating to themselves—their fortune, reputation, everything in which self can come in, and this perhaps attended with the rightest judgment in all other matters. In others this partiality is not so general, has not taken hold of the whole man, but is confined to some particular favourite passion, interest, or pursuit; suppose ambition, covetousness, or any other: and these persons may probably judge and determine what is perfectly just and proper, even in things in which they themselves are concerned, if these things have no relation to their particular favourite passion or pursuit. Hence arises that amazing incongruity and seeming inconsistency of character from whence slight observers take it for granted that the whole is hypocritical and false, not being able otherwise to reconcile the several parts, whereas, in truth, there is real honesty so far as it goes. There is such a thing as men's being honest to such a degree and in such respects but no further, and this, as it is true, so it is absolutely necessary to be taken notice of and allowed them, such general and undistinguishing censure of their whole characters, as designing and false, being one main thing which confirms them in their self-deceit. They know that the whole censure is not true, and so take it for granted that no part of it is.

But to go on with the explanation of the thing itself, vice in general consists in having an unreasonable and too great regard to ourselves in comparison of others. Robbery and murder is never from the love of injustice or cruelty, but to gratify some other passion, to gain some supposed advantage, and it is false selfishness alone, whether cool or passionate, which makes a man resolutely pursue that end, be

it ever so much to the injury of another; but, whereas, in common and ordinary wickedness, this unreasonableness, this partiality and selfishness relates only, or chiefly, to the temper and passions; in the characters we are now considering it reaches to the understanding, and influences the very judgment.[2] And besides that general want of distrust and diffidence concerning our own character, there are, you see, two things which may thus prejudice and darken the understanding itself, that overfondness for ourselves which we are all so liable to, and also being under the power of any particular passion or appetite, or engaged in any particular pursuit; and these, especially the last of the two, may be in so great a degree as to influence our judgment even of other persons and their behaviour; thus a man whose temper is formed to ambition or covetousness shall even approve of them sometimes in others.

This seems to be, in a good measure, the account of self-partiality and self-deceit, when traced up to its original; whether it be, or be not thought satisfactory, that there is such a thing is manifest, and that it is the occasion of great part of the unreasonable behaviour of men towards each other; that by means of it they palliate their vices and

[2] That peculiar regard for ourselves which frequently produces this partiality of judgment in our own favour, may have a quite contrary effect, and occasion the utmost diffidence and distrust of ourselves; were it only, as it may set us upon a more frequent and strict survey and review of our own character and behaviour. This search or recollection itself implies somewhat of diffidence; and the discoveries we make, what is brought to our view, may possibly increase it. Goodwill to another may either blind our judgment, so as to make us overlook his faults; or it may put us upon exercising that judgment with greater strictness, to see whether he is so faultless and perfect as we wish him. If that peculiar regard to ourselves leads us to examine our own character with this greater severity, in order really to improve and grow better, it is the most commendable turn of mind possible, and can scarce be to excess. But if, as everything hath its counterfeit, we are so much employed about ourselves in order to disguise what is amiss, and to make a better appearance; or if our attention to ourselves has chiefly this effect, it is liable to run up into the greatest weakness and excess, and is like all other excesses its own disappointment; for scarce any show themselves to advantage, who are over-solicitous of doing so.

follies to themselves, and that it prevents their applying to themselves those reproofs and instructions which they meet with either in Scripture or in moral and religious discourses, though exactly suitable to the state of their own mind and the course of their behaviour. There is one thing further to be added here, that the temper we distinguish by hardness of heart with respect to others, joined with this self-partiality, will carry a man almost any lengths of wickedness in the way of oppression, hard usage of others, and even to plain injustice, without his having, from what appears, any real sense at all of it. This, indeed, was not the general character of David, for he plainly gave scope to the affections of compassion and goodwill as well as to his passions of another kind.

But as some occasions and circumstances lie more open to this self-deceit, and give it greater scope and opportunities than others, these require to be particularly mentioned.

It is to be observed, then, that as there are express determinate acts of wickedness, such as murder, adultery, theft, so, on the other hand, there are numberless cases in which the vice and wickedness cannot be exactly defined, but consists in a certain general temper and course of action, or in the neglect of some duty, suppose charity or any other, whose bounds and degrees are not fixed. This is the very province of self-deceit and self-partiality, here it governs without check or control. "For what commandment is there broken? Is there a transgression where there is no law? a vice which cannot be defined?"

Whoever will consider the whole commerce of human life, will see that a great part, perhaps the greatest part of the intercourse amongst mankind cannot be reduced to fixed determinate rules; yet in those cases there is a right and a wrong; a merciful, a liberal, a kind and compassionate behaviour, which surely is our duty, and an unmerciful contracted spirit, a hard and oppressive course of behaviour, which is most certainly immoral and vicious; but who can define precisely wherein that contracted spirit and hard usage of others consist, as murder and theft may be defined? There is not a word in our language which expresses more detestable wickedness than oppression, yet the nature of this vice cannot be so exactly stated, nor the bounds of

it so determinately marked, as that we shall be able to say in all instances where rigid right and justice ends and oppression begins. In these cases there is great latitude left for every one to determine for and consequently to deceive himself. It is chiefly in these cases that self-deceit comes in, as every one must see that there is much larger scope for it here than in express, single, determinate acts of wickedness; however, it comes in with respect to the circumstances attending the most gross and determinate acts of wickedness. Of this the story of David, now before us, affords the most astonishing instance. It is really prodigious to see a man, before so remarkable for virtue and piety, going on deliberately from adultery to murder with the same cool contrivance, and from what appears, with as little disturbance, as a man would endeavour to prevent the ill consequences of a mistake he had made in any common matter. That total insensibility of mind with respect to those horrid crimes, after the commission of them, manifestly shows that he did some way or other delude himself, and this could not be with respect to the crimes themselves, they were so manifestly of the grossest kind. What the particular circumstances were with which he extenuated them, and quieted and deceived himself, is not related.

Having thus explained the nature of internal hypocrisy and self-deceit, and remarked the occasions upon which it exerts itself, there are several things further to be observed concerning it; that all of the sources to which it was traced up are sometimes observable together in one and the same person, but that one of them is more remarkable, and to a higher degree, in some, and others of them are so in others; that in general it is a complicated thing, and may be in all different degrees and kinds; that the temper itself is essentially in its own nature vicious and immoral. It is unfairness; it is dishonesty; it is falseness of heart, and is therefore so far from extenuating guilt that it is itself the greatest of all guilt in proportion to the degree it prevails, for it is a corruption of the whole moral character in its principle. Our understanding and sense of good and evil is the light and guide of life; if, therefore, this light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness![3] For this

[3] Matt. vi. 23.

reason our Saviour puts an evil eye as the direct opposite to a single eye; the absence of that simplicity, which these last words imply, being itself evil and vicious. And whilst men are under the power of this temper, in proportion still to the degree they are so, they are fortified on every side against conviction: and when they hear the vice and folly of what is in truth their own course of life, exposed in the justest and strongest manner, they will often assent to it, and even carry the matter further; persuading themselves, one does not know how, but some way or other persuading themselves, that they are out of the case, and that it hath no relation to them. Yet, notwithstanding this, there frequently appears a suspicion, that all is not right, or as it should be; and perhaps there is always at bottom somewhat of this sort. There are doubtless many instances of the ambitious, the revengeful, the covetous, and those whom with too great indulgence we only call the men of pleasure, who will not allow themselves to think how guilty they are, who explain and argue away their guilt to themselves: and though they do really impose upon themselves in some measure, yet there are none of them but have, if not a proper knowledge, yet at least, an implicit suspicion, where the weakness lies, and what part of their behaviour they have reason to wish unknown or forgotten for ever. Truth, and real good sense, and thorough integrity, carry along with them a peculiar consciousness of their own genuineness: there is a feeling belonging to them, which does not accompany their counterfeits, error, folly, half-honesty, partial and slight regards to virtue and right, so far only as they are consistent with that course of gratification which men happen to be set upon. And, if this be the case; it is much the same, as if we should suppose a man to have had a general veiw of some scene, enough to satisfy him that it was very disagreeable, and then to shut his eyes, that he might not have a particular or distinct view of its several deformities. It is as easy to close the eyes of the mind, as those of the body: and the former is more frequently done with wilfulness, and yet not attended to, than the latter; the actions of the mind being more quick and transient than those of the senses. This may be further illustrated by another thing observable in ordinary life. It is not uncommon for persons, who run out their fortunes,

entirely to neglect looking into the state of their affairs, and this from a general knowledge that the condition of them is bad. These extravagant people are perpetually ruined before they themselves expected it: and they tell you for an excuse, and tell you truly, that they did not think they were so much in debt, or that their expenses so far exceeded their income. And yet no one will take this for an excuse, who is sensible that their ignorance of their particular circumstances was owing to their general knowledge of them; that is, their general knowledge, that matters were not well with them, prevented their looking into particulars. There is somewhat of the like kind with this in respect to morals, virtue, and religion. Men find that the survey of themselves, their own heart and temper, their own life and behaviour, doth not afford them satisfaction: things are not as they should be: therefore they turn away, will not go over particulars, or look deeper, lest they should find more amiss. For who would choose to be put out of humour with himself? No one surely, if it were not in order to mend, and to be more thoroughly and better pleased with himself for the future.

If this sincere self-enjoyment and home-satisfaction be thought desirable, and worth some pains and diligence; the following reflections will, I suppose, deserve your attention; as what may be of service and assistance to all who are in any measure honestly disposed, for avoiding that fatal self-deceit, and towards getting acquainted with themselves.

The first is, that those who have never had any suspicion of, who have never made allowances for this weakness in themselves, who have never (if I may be allowed such a manner of speaking) caught themselves in it, may almost take for granted that they have been very much misled by it. For consider: nothing is more manifest, than that affection and passion of all kinds influence the judgment. Now as we have naturally a greater regard to ourselves than to others, as the private affection is more prevalent than the public; the former will have proportionally a greater influence upon the judgment, upon our way of considering things. People are not backward in owning this partiality of judgment, in cases of friendship and natural relation. The reason is obvious, why it is not so readily acknowledged, when the interest which misleads us is more confined, con-

fined to ourselves: but we all take notice of it in each other in these cases. There is not any observation more common, than that there is no judging of a matter from hearing only one side. This is not founded upon supposition, at least it is not always, of a formed design in the relater to deceive: for it holds in cases, where he expects that the whole will be told over again by the other side. But the supposition, which this observation is founded upon, is the very thing now before us; namely, that men are exceedingly prone to deceive themselves, and judge too favourably in every respect, where themselves and their own interest are concerned. Thus, though we have not the least reason to suspect that such an interested person hath any intention to deceive us, yet we of course make great allowances for his having deceived himself. If this be general, almost universal, it is prodigious that every man can think himself an exception, and that he is free from this self-partiality. The direct contrary is the truth. Every man may take for granted that he has a great deal of it, till, from the strictest observation upon himself, he finds particular reason to think otherwise.

Secondly, There is one easy and almost sure way to avoid being misled by this self-partiality, and to get acquainted with our real character: to have regard to the suspicious part of it, and keep a steady eye over ourselves in that respect. Suppose then a man fully satisfied with himself, and his own behaviour; such an one, if you please, as the Pharisee in the Gospel, or a better man—well, but allowing this good opinion you have of yourself to be true, yet every one is liable to be misrepresented. Suppose then an enemy were to set about defaming you, what part of your character would he single out? What particular scandal, think you, would he be most likely to fix upon you? And what would the world be most ready to believe? There is scarce a man living but could, from the most transient superficial view of himself, answer this question. What is that ill thing, that faulty behaviour, which I am apprehensive an enemy, who was thoroughly acquainted with me, would be most likely to lay to my charge, and which the world would be most apt to believe? It is indeed possible that a man may not be guilty in that respect. All that I say is, let him in plainness and honesty fix upon that part of his character for a particu-

lar survey and reflection; and by this he will come to acquainted, whether he be guilty or innocent in that respe and how far he is one or the other.

Thirdly, It would very much prevent our being misled this self-partiality, to reduce that practical rule of o Saviour, whatsoever ye would that men should do to yo even so do unto them, to our judgment, and way of thinkin This rule, you see, consists of two parts. One is, to subs tute another for yourself, when you take a survey of a part of your behaviour, or consider what is proper and fit a reasonable for you to do upon any occasion: the other pa is, that you substitute yourself in the room of another; co sider yourself as the person affected by such a behaviour, towards whom such an action is done: and then you wou not only see, but likewise feel, the reasonableness or unre sonableness of such an action or behaviour. But alas, t rule itself may be dishonestly applied: there are persons, w have not impartiality enough with respect to themselv nor regard enough for others, to be able to make a just app cation of it. This just application, if men would hones make it, is in effect all that I have been recommending; is the whole thing, the direct contrary to that inward d honesty as respecting our intercourse with our fello creatures. And even the bearing this rule in their though may be of some service; the attempt thus to apply it, is attempt towards being fair and impartial, and may char unawares to show them to themselves, to show them the tru of the case they are considering.

Upon the whole it is manifest, that there is such a thi as this self-partiality and self-deceit: that in some person is to a degree which would be thought incredible, were the instances before our eyes; of which the behaviour David is perhaps the highest possible one, in a single p ticular case; for there is not the least appearance, that reached his general character: that we are almost all of influenced by it in some degree, and in some respects: t therefore every one ought to have an eye to and beware of And all that I have further to add upon this subject is, t either there is a difference between right and wrong, or th is not: religion is true, or it is not. If it be not, there is reason for any concern about it: but if it be true, it requi

real fairness of mind and honesty of heart. And, if people will be wicked, they had better of the two be so from the common vicious passions without such refinements, than from this deep and calm source of delusion; which undermines the whole principle of good; darkens that light, that candle of the Lord within, which is to direct our steps; and corrupts conscience, which is the guide of life.

SERMON XI.

UPON THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

[Of the love of our neighbour as related to self-love (xi.), and as including all virtue (xii.)

INTRO.—Contracted affections (like self-love), may oppose their own end, private good. The supposed contrariety between benevolence and self-love may be only apparent.

1 Self-love, as distinguished from other passions.

a Self-love has an internal object, other affections external objects.

b Such affections distinct from self-love, though part of ourselves.

c All language recognises this distinction. Self-love produces interested actions; particular affections, actions which are friendly, ambitious, passionate, etc.

d Happiness does not consist in self-love, but in the wise gratification of all our affections.

e Self-love often fails to produce happiness; it often produces anxiety, and

f When in excess, produces misery.

Hence self-love is not only distinct from particular affections, but is so far from being our only rule, that it often disappoints itself, especially when made our only principle.

2 Self-love as distinguished from benevolence.

a These are distinguished, though not therefore opposed.

Shown not to be opposed—

1 From the nature of the affections themselves, self-love does not exclude particular affections, nor does benevolence.

All particular affections equally interested or disinterested.

2 From the course of action suggested by them—

Affections tend both to private and to public good.

Their tendency to one object does not disturb their connexion with another.

Benevolence produces as much enjoyment as ambition.

3 From the temper of mind produced by them—

(a) Benevolence gives a pleasure over and above other pleasures, with which it does not interfere.

(b) Has an assurance of special favour from God.

(c) Hence self-love and benevolence are so far from being opposed, that the second may be the easiest way of gratifying the first.

(d) It is true that particular affections may be gratified, so as to interfere with self-love, but benevolence interferes with it less than any other.

(e) The origin of the mistake, that benevolence and self-love interfere, is in the confusion of property and happiness. That they are not opposed is shown—

4 Further, from Scripture, which inculcates benevolence, and yet recognises self-love, and appeals to it.

The foregoing is intended to gain favour for benevolence, which is peculiarly enjoined by the spirit and facts of the gospel; and which (it is important to show) is not interfered with by that desire for happiness (self-love), which is natural to man.]

ROMANS xiii. 9.

And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

INTRO. It is commonly observed, that there is a disposition in men to complain of the viciousness and corruption of the age in which they live, as greater than that of former ones, which is usually followed with this further observation, that mankind has been in that respect much the same in all times. Now not to determine whether this last be not contradicted by the accounts of history; thus much can scarce be doubted, that vice and folly take different turns, and some particular kinds of them are more open and avowed in some ages than in others; and, I suppose, it may be spoken of as very much the distinction of the present, to profess a contracted spirit, and greater regards to self-interest, than appears to have been done formerly. Upon this account it seems worth while to inquire, whether private interest is likely to be promoted in proportion to the degree in which self-love engrosses us,

and prevails over all other principles, or whether the contracted affection may not possibly be so prevalent as to disappoint itself, and even contradict its own end, private good.

And since, further, there is generally thought to be some peculiar kind of contrariety between self-love and the love of our neighbour, between the pursuit of public and of private good; insomuch, that when you are recommending one of these, you are supposed to be speaking against the other, and from hence arises a secret prejudice against, and frequently open scorn of all talk of public spirit, and real good-will to our fellow creatures; it will be necessary to inquire what respect benevolence hath to self-love, and the pursuit of private interest to the pursuit of public, or whether there be anything of that peculiar inconsistence and contrariety between them, over and above what there is between self-love and other passions and particular affections, and their respective pursuits.

These inquiries, it is hoped, may be favourably attended to, for there shall be all possible concessions made to the favourite passion, which hath so much allowed to it, and whose cause is so universally pleaded, it shall be treated with the utmost tenderness, and concern for its interests.

In order to this, as well as to determine the forementioned questions, it will be necessary to consider the nature, the object and end of that self-love, as distinguished from other principles or affections in the mind, and their respective objects.

Every man hath a general desire of his own happiness; and likewise a variety of particular affections, passions, and appetites to particular external objects. The former proceeds from, or is self-love, and seems inseparable from all sensible creatures, who can reflect upon themselves and their own interest or happiness, so as to have that interest an object to their minds; what is to be said of the latter is, that they proceed from, or together make up that particular nature, according to which man is made. The object the former pursues is somewhat internal, our own happiness, enjoyment, satisfaction, whether we have, or have not a distinct particular perception what it is, or wherein it consists; the objects of the latter are this or that particular external thing, which the affections tend towards, and of which it hath always a

particular idea or perception. The principle we call self-love never seeks anything external for the sake of the thing, but only as a means of happiness or good, particular affections rest in the external things themselves. One belongs to man as a reasonable creature reflecting upon his own interest or happiness. The other, though quite distinct from reason, are as much a part of human nature.

That all particular appetites and passions are towards external things themselves, distinct from the pleasure arising from them, is manifested from hence, that there could not be this pleasure, were it not for that prior suitableness between the object and the passion, there could be no enjoyment or delight from one thing more than another, from eating food more than from swallowing a stone, if there were not an affection or appetite to one thing more than another.

b Every particular affection, even the love of our neighbour, is as really our own affection, as self-love, and the pleasure arising from its gratification is as much my own pleasure, as the pleasure self-love would have, from knowing I myself should be happy some time hence, would be my own pleasure. And if, because every particular affection is a man's own, and the pleasure arising from its gratification his own pleasure, or pleasure to himself, such particular affection must be called self-love,[1] according to this way of speaking, no creature whatever can possibly act but merely from self-love; and every action and every affection whatever is to be resolved up into this one principle. But then this is not the language of mankind: or if it were, we should want words to express the difference, between the principle of an action, proceeding from cool consideration that it will be to my own advantage, and an action, suppose of revenge, or of friendship, by which a man runs upon certain ruin, to do evil or good to another. It is manifest the principles of these actions are totally different, and so want different words to be distinguished by; all that they agree in is, that they both ...ed from, and are done to gratify an inclination in a ...lf. But the principle or inclination in one case is ... the other, hatred or love of another. There is ...ction between the cool principle of self-love, or ... of our own happiness, as one part of our na-

... Note on p. 390.]

ture, and one principle of action; and the particular affections towards particular external objects, as another part of our nature, and another principle of action. How much soever therefore is to be allowed for self-love, yet it cannot be allowed to be the whole of our inward constitution, because, you see, there are other parts or principles which come into it.

Further, private happiness or good is all which self-love can make us desire, or be concerned about; in having this, consists its gratification, it is an affection to ourselves, a regard to our own interest, happiness, and private good; and in the proportion a man hath this, he is interested, or a lover of himself. Let this be kept in mind; because there is commonly, as I shall presently have occasion to observe, another sense put upon these words. On the other hand, particular affections tend towards particular external things; these are their objects, having these is their end, in this consists their gratification, no matter whether it be, or be not, upon the whole, our interest or happiness. An action done from the former of these principles is called an interested action. An action proceeding from any of the latter has its denomination of passionate, ambitious, friendly, revengeful, or any other, from the particular appetite or affection from which it proceeds. Thus self-love as one part of human nature, and the several particular principles as the other part, are, themselves, their objects and ends, stated and shown.

From hence it will be easy to see, how far, and in what ways, each of these can contribute and be subservient to the private good of the individual. Happiness does not consist in self-love. The desire of happines is no more the thing itself, than the desire of riches is the possession or enjoyment of them. People may love themselves with the most entire and unbounded affection, and yet be extremely miserable. Neither can self-love any way help them out, but by setting them on work to get rid of the causes of their misery, to gain or make use of those objects which are by nature adapted to afford satisfaction. Happiness or satisfaction consists only in the enjoyment of those objects, which are by nature suited to our several particular appetites, passions, and affections. So that if self-love wholly engrosses us, and leaves no room for any other principle, there can be absolutely no such thing at all as happiness, or enjoyment of any kind whatever; since

happiness consists in the gratification of particular passions, which supposes the having of them. Self-love then does not constitute this or that to be our interest or good; but, our interest or good being constituted by nature, and supposed self-love only puts us upon obtaining and securing it. Therefore if it be probable that self-love may prevail and exert itself in a degree or manner which is not subservient to this end; then it will not follow, that our interest will be promoted in proportion to the degree in which that principle engrosses us, and prevails over others. Nay, further, the private and contracted affection, when it is not subservient to this end, private good, may, for anything that appears, have a direct contrary tendency and effect. And if we will consider the matter, we shall see that it often really has. Disengagement is absolutely necessary to enjoyment, and a person may have so steady and fixed an eye upon his own interest, whatever he places it in, as may hinder him from attending to many gratifications within his reach, which others have their minds free and open to. Over fondness for a child is not generally thought to be for its advantage; and if there be any guess to be made from appearances, surely that character we call selfish is not the most promising for happiness. Such a temper may plainly be and exert itself in a degree and manner which may give unnecessary and useless solicitude and anxiety, in a degree and manner which may prevent obtaining the means and materials of enjoyment, as well as the making use of them. Immoderate self-love does very ill consult its own interest: and how much soever a paradox it may appear, it is certainly true, that even from self-love we should endeavour to get over all inordinate regard to, and consideration of ourselves. Every one of our passions and affections hath its natural stint and bound, which may easily be exceeded; whereas our enjoyments can possibly be but in a determinate measure and degree. Therefore such excess of the affection, since it cannot procure any enjoyment, must in all cases be useless, but is generally attended with inconveniences, and often is downright pain and misery. This holds as much with regard to self-love as to all other affections. The natural degree of it, so far as it sets us on work to gain and make use of the materials of satisfaction may be to our real advantage, but

beyond or besides this, it is in several respects an inconvenience and disadvantage. Thus it appears, that private interest is so far from being likely to be promoted in proportion to the degree in which self-love engrosses us, and prevails over all other principles, that the contracted affection may be so prevalent as to disappoint itself, and even contradict its own end, private good.

"But who, except the most sordidly covetous, ever 2
thought there was any rivalship between the love of greatness, honour, power, or between sensual appetites, and self-love? No, there is a perfect harmony between them. It is by means of these particular appetites and affections that self-love is gratified in enjoyment, happiness, and satisfaction. The competition and rivalship is between self-love, and the love of our neighbour: that affection which leads us out of ourselves, makes us regardless of our own interest, and substitute that of another in its stead." Whether then there be any peculiar competition and contrariety in this case, shall now be considered.

Self-love and interestedness was stated to consist in or be an affection to ourselves, a regard to our own private good:
it is therefore distinct from benevolence, which is an affection 3.
to the good of our fellow-creatures. But that benevolence is distinct from, that is, not the same thing with self-love, is no reason for its being looked upon with any peculiar suspicion; because every principle whatever, by means of which self-love is gratified, is distinct from it, and all things which are distinct from each other, are equally so. A man has an affection or aversion to another: that one of these tends to and is gratified by doing good, that the other tends to and is gratified by doing harm, does not in the least alter the respect which either one or the other of these inward feelings has to self-love. We use the word property so as to exclude any other persons having an interest in that of which we say a particular man has the property. And we often use the word selfish so as to exclude in the same manner all regards to the good of others. But the cases are not parallel: for though that exclusion is really part of the idea of property; yet such positive exclusion, or bringing this peculiar disregard to the good of others into the idea, or self- love, is in reality adding to the idea of changing it from what it was

before stated to consist in, namely, in an affection to ourselves.[2] This being the whole idea of self-love, it cannot otherwise exclude goodwill or love of others, than merely by not including it, no otherwise, than it excludes love of arts or reputation, or of anything else. Neither on the other hand does benevolence, any more than love of arts or of reputation, exclude self-love. Love of our neighbour then has just the same respect to, is no more distant from self-love, than hatred of our neighbour, or than love or hatred of anything else. Thus the principles, from which men rush upon certain ruin for the destruction of an enemy, and for the preservation of a friend, have the same respect to the private affection, and are equally interested, or equally disinterested: and it is of no avail, whether they are said to be one or the other. Therefore to those who are shocked to hear virtue spoken of as disinterested, it may be allowed that it is indeed absurd to speak thus of it; unless hatred, several particular instances of vice, and all the common affections and aversions in mankind, are acknowledged to be disinterested too. Is there any less inconsistence, between the love of inanimate things, or of creatures merely sensitive, and self-love; than between self-love, and the love of our neighbour? Is desire of and delight in the happiness of another any more a diminution of self-love, than desire of and delight in the esteem of another? They are both equally desire of and delight in somewhat external to ourselves: either both or neither are so. The object of self-love is expressed in the term, self: and every appetite of sense, and every particular affection of the heart, are equally interested or disinterested, because the objects of them all are equally self or somewhat else. Whatever ridicule therefore the mention of a disinterested principle or action may be supposed to lie open to, must, upon the matter being thus stated, relate to ambition, and every appetite and particular affection, as much as to benevolence. And indeed all the ridicule, and all the grave perplexity, of which this subject hath had its full share, is merely from words. The most intelligible way of speaking of it seems to be this: that self-love and the actions done in consequence of it (for these will presently appear to be the same as to this question) are interested; that particular affections towards external objects,

[2] P. 471.

and the actions done in consequence of those affections, are not so. But every one is at liberty to use words as he pleases. All that is here insisted upon is, that ambition, revenge, benevolence, all particular passions whatever, and all the actions they produce, are equally interested or disinterested.

Thus it appears that there is no peculiar contrariety between self-love and benevolence; no greater competition between these, than between any other particular affections and self-love. This relates to the affections themselves. Let us now see whether there be any peculiar contrariety between the respective courses of life which these affections lead to; whether there be any greater competition between the pursuit of private and of public good, than between any other particular pursuits and that of private good.

There seems no other reason to suspect that there is any such peculiar contrariety, but only that the courses of action which benevolence leads to, has a more direct tendency to promote the good of others, than that course of action which love of reputation, suppose, or any other particular affection leads to. But that any affection tends to the happiness of another, does not hinder its tending to one's own happiness too. That others enjoy the benefit of the air and the light of the sun, does not hinder but that these are as much one's own private advantage now, as they would be if we had the property of them exclusive of all others. So a pursuit which tends to promote the good of another, yet may have as great tendency to promote private interest, as a pursuit which does not tend to the good of another at all, or which is mischievous to him. All particular affections whatever, resentment, benevolence, love of arts, equally lead to a course of action for their own gratification, *i. e.*, the gratification of ourselves; and the gratification of each gives delight: so far then it is manifest they have all the same respect to private interest. Now take into consideration further concerning those three pursuits, that the end of the first is the harm, of the second, the good of another, of the last, somewhat indifferent; and is there any necessity that these additional considerations should alter the respect, which we before saw these three pursuits had to private interest; or render any one of them less conducive to it, than any other? Thus one man's affection is to honour as his end; in order to obtain which,

he thinks no pains too great. Suppose another with such a singularity of mind, as to have the same affection to public good as his end, which he endeavours with the same labour to obtain. In case of success, surely the man of benevolence hath as great enjoyment as the man of ambition; they both equally having the end their affections, in the same degree, tended to: but in case of disappointment, the benevolent man has clearly the advantage; since endeavouring to do good, considered as a virtuous pursuit, is gratified by its own consciousness, *i. e.*, is in a degree its own reward.

And as to these two, or benevolence and any other particular passions whatever, considered in a further view, as forming a general temper, which more or less disposes us for enjoyment of all the common blessings of life, distinct from their own gratification: is benevolence less the temper of tranquillity and freedom than ambition or covetousness? Does the benevolent man appear less easy with himself, from his love to his neighbour? Does he less relish his being? Is there any peculiar gloom seated on his face? Is his mind less open to entertainment, to any particular gratification? Nothing is more manifest, than that being in good-humour, which is benevolence whilst it lasts, is itself the temper of satisfaction and enjoyment.

Suppose then a man sitting down to consider how he might become most easy to himself, and attain the greatest pleasure he could; all that which is his real natural happiness. This can only consist in the enjoyment of those objects, which are by nature adapted to our several faculties. These particular enjoyments make up the sum total of our happiness: and they are supposed to arise from riches, honours, and the gratification of sensual appetites: be it so: yet none profess themselves so completely happy in these enjoyments, but that there is room left in the mind for others, if they were presented to them: nay these, as much as they engage us, are not thought so high, but that human nature is capable even of greater. Now there have been persons in all ages, who have professed that they found satisfaction in the exercise of charity, in the love of their neighbour, in endeavouring to promote the happiness of all they had to do with, and in the pursuit of what is just and right and good, as the general bent of their mind, and end of their life; and that

doing an action of baseness or cruelty, would be as great violence to their self, as much breaking in upon their nature, as any external force. Persons of this character would add, if they might be heard, that they consider themselves as acting in the view of an infinite Being, who is in a much higher sense the object of reverence and of love, than all the world besides: and therefore they could have no more enjoyment from a wicked action done under his eye, than the persons to whom they are making their apology could, if all mankind were the spectators of it; and that the satisfaction of approving themselves to his unerring judgment, to whom they thus refer all their actions, is a more continued settled satisfaction than any this world can afford; as also that they have, no less than others, a mind free and open to all the common innocent gratifications of it, such as they are. And if we go no further, does there appear any absurdity in this? Will any one take upon him to say, that a man cannot find his account in this general course of life, as much as in the most unbounded ambition, and the excesses of pleasure? Or that such a person has not consulted so well for himself, for the satisfaction and peace of his own mind, as the ambitious or dissolute man? And though the consideration, that God himself will in the end justify their taste, and support their cause, is not formally to be insisted upon here; yet thus much comes in, that all enjoyments whatever are much more clear and unmixed from the assurance that they will end well. Is it certain then that there is nothing in these pretensions to happiness? especially when there are not wanting persons, who have supported themselves with satisfactions of this kind in sickness, poverty, disgrace, and in the very pangs of death; whereas it is manifest all other enjoyments fail in these circumstances. This surely looks suspicious of having somewhat in it. Self-love methinks should be alarmed. May she not possibly pass over greater pleasures, than those she is so wholly taken up with?

The short of the matter is no more than this. Happiness consists in the gratification of certain affections, appetites, passions, with objects which are by Nature adapted to them. Self-love may indeed set us on work to gratify these: but happiness or enjoyment has no immediate connection with self-love but arises from such gratification alone. Love of

our neighbour is one of those affections. T as a virtuous principle, is gratified by a c endeavouring to promote the good of others; as a natural affection, its gratification consist accomplishment of this endeavour. Now gratification of this affection, whether in that or this accomplishment, has the same respect indulgence of any other affection; they e from or do not proceed from self-love, they or equally exclude this principle. Thus it a nevolence and the pursuit of public good h great respect to self-love and the pursuit of any other particular passions, and their respe Neither is covetousness, whether as a temper exception to this. For if by covetousness is and pursuit of riches for their own sake, with to, or consideration of the uses of them; this do with self-love, as benevolence hath. But usually meant, not such madness and tota mind, but immoderate affection to and p as possessions in order to some further end faction, interest, or good. This therefore is affection, or particular pursuit, but it is the g of self-love, and the general pursuit of our o which reason, the word selfish is by every o to this temper and pursuit. Now as it is ridi that self-love and the love of our neighbour neither is it asserted, that following these di hath the same tendency and respect to ou The comparison is not between self-love and neighbour; between pursuit of our own in interest of others: but between the several tions in human nature towards external obje of the comparison; and the one particular good of our neighbour, as the other part of been shown, that all these have the same res and private interest.

d) There is indeed frequently an inconsistenc between self-love or private interest, and t ticular appetites, passions, affections, or th lead to. But this competition or interfering

dental; and happens much oftener between pride, revenge, sensual gratifications, and private interest, than between private interest and benevolence. For nothing is more common, than to see men give themelves up to a passion or an affection to their known prejudice and ruin, and in direct contradiction to manifest and real interest, and the loudest calls of self-love: whereas the seeming competitions and interfering between benevolence and private interest, relate much more to the materials or means of enjoyment, than to enjoyment itself. There is often an interfering in the former, when there is none in the latter. Thus as to riches: so much money as a man gives away, so much less will remain in his possession. Here is a real interfering. But though a man cannot possibly give without lessening his fortune, yet there are multitudes might give without lessening their own enjoyment; because they may have more than they can turn to any real use or advantage to themselves. Thus the more thought and time anyone employs about the interests and good of others, he must necessarily have less to attend his own; but he may have so ready and large a supply of his own wants, that such thought might be really useless to himself, though of great service and assistance to others.

The general mistake that there is some greater inconsistence between endeavouring to promote the good of another and self-interest, than between self-interest and pursuing anything else, seems, as hath already been hinted, to arise from our notions of property; and to be carried on by this property's being supposed to be itself our happiness or good. People are so very much taken up with this one subject, that they seem from it to have formed a general way of thinking, which they apply to other things that they have nothing to do with. Hence, in a confused and slight way, it might well be taken for granted, that another's having no interest in an affection (*i. e.*, his good not being the object of it) renders, as one may speak, the proprietor's interest in it greater; and that if another had an interest in it, this would render his less, or occasion that such affection could not be so friendly to self-love, or conducive to private good, as an affection or pursuit which has not a regard to the good of another. This I say might be taken for granted, whilst it was not attended to, that the object of every

particular affection is equally somewhat external to ourselves; and whether it be the good of another person, or whether it be any other external thing, makes no alteration with regard to its being one's own affection, and the gratification of it one's own private enjoyment. And so far as it is taken for granted, that barely having the means and materials of enjoyment is what constitutes interest and happiness; that our interest or good consists in possessions themselves, in having the property of riches, houses, lands, gardens, not in the enjoyment of them; so far it will even more strongly be taken for granted, in the way already explained, that an affection's conducing to the good of another, must even necessarily occasion it to conduce less to private good, if not to be positively detrimental to it. For, if property and happiness are one and the same thing, as by increasing the property of another, you lessen your property, so by promoting the happiness of another, you must lessen your own happiness. But whatever occasioned the mistake, I hope it has been fully proved to be one: as it has been proved, that there is no peculiar rivalship or competition between self-love and benevolence; that as there may be a competition between these two, so there may also between any particular affection whatever and self-love; that every particular affection, benevolence among the rest, is subservient to self-love by being the instrument of private enjoyment; and that in one respect benevolence contributes more to private interest, *i. e.*, enjoyment or satisfaction, than any other of the particular common affections, as it is in a degree its own gratification.

And to all these things may be added, that religion, from whence arises our strongest obligation to benevolence, is so far from disowning the principle of self-love, that it often addresses itself to that very principle, and always to the mind in that state when reason presides; and there can no access be had to the understanding but by convincing men that the course of life we would persuade them to is not contrary to their interest. It may be allowed, without any prejudice to the cause of virtue and religion, that our ideas of happiness and misery are of all our ideas the nearest and most important to us; that they will, nay, if you please, that they ought to prevail over those of order, and beauty,

and harmony, and proportion, if there should ever be, as it is impossible there ever should be, any inconsistence between them: though these last two, as expressing the fitness of actions, are real as truth itself. Let it be allowed though virtue or moral rectitude does indeed consist in affection to and pursuit of what is right and good, as such; yet that when we sit down in a cool hour, we can neither justify to ourselves this or any other pursuit, till we are convinced that it will be for our happiness, or at least not contrary to it.

Common reason and humanity will have some influence upon mankind, whatever becomes of speculations: but, so far as the interests of virtue depend upon the theory of it being secured from open scorn, so far its very being in the world depends upon its appearing to have no contrariety to private interest and self-love. The foregoing observations therefore, it is hoped, may have gained a little ground in favour of the precept before us; the particular explanation of which, shall be the subject of the next discourse.

I will conclude at present, with observing the peculiar obligation which we are under to virtue and religion, as enforced in the verses following the text, in the Epistle for the day, from our Saviour's coming into the world. The night is far spent, the day is at hand; let us therefore cast off the works of darkness, and let us put on the armour of light, etc. The meaning and force of which exhortation is, that Christianity lays us under new obligations to a good life, as by it the will of God is more clearly revealed, and as it affords additional motives to the practice of it, over and above those which arise out of the nature of virtue and vice; I might add, as our Saviour has set us a perfect example of goodness in our own nature. Now love and charity is plainly the thing in which he hath placed his religion; in which therefore, as we have any pretence to the name of Christians, we must place ours. He hath at once enjoined it upon us by way of command with peculiar force; and by his example as having undertaken the work of our salvation out of pure love and goodwill to mankind. The endeavour to set home this example upon our minds is a very proper employment of this season, which is bringing on the festival of his birth; which as it may teach us many

excellent lessons of humility, resignation, and obedience to the will of God; so there is none it recommends with greater authority, force and advantage, than this of love and charity; since it was for us men, and for our salvation, that he came down from heaven and was incarnate, and was made man; that he might teach us our duty, and more especially that he might enforce the practice of it, reform mankind, and finally bring us to that eternal salvation, of which he is the author to all those that obey him.

SERMON XII.

UPON THE LOVE OF OUR NEIGHBOUR.

[INTRO.—The subject of the discourse. Consider—

1 The object of the affection;

Love of our neighbour, or benevolence, seeks the good of others, and in its noblest form it is the perfection of God.

Why defined as love *of our neighbour*.

2 The proper extent of the affection: We are to love others *as ourselves*. This implies—

1 That this love is to be of the *same kind*.

We have a common interest in others, and in ourselves.

This is the proper temper of virtue; *love*.

2 That our love for others is to bear a *certain proportion* to our love for ourselves.

A proportion in affections implied in all virtuous characters.

So a due proportion of benevolence and self-love is implied here.

What the proportion is to be, is not easily decided, for affection is not easily measured; but as to *actions*, the expressions of affection, the more others occupy our thoughts (provided we neglect not ourselves), the better. Even if this imply—

3 That our love for others is to equal our love for ourselves, no ill consequence can ensue, for

Men have other affections for themselves, not felt for others.

They are specially interested in themselves.

They have a particular perception of their own interests, so that there is no fear of self-neglect.

3 The influence of this affection upon our general temper. Its effect is—
 1 To produce all charitableness.
 2 To fit men for every relation and duty.
 3 To moderate party feeling.
 4 To prevent, or heal all strife.
4 This affection includes all virtue.
Reason, as subservient to benevolence, is supposed to operate in enforcing attention to particular relations.
 1 Love prompts men to seek the greatest happiness of all, which is itself a discharge of all our obligations.
 2 Love even prompts to the practice of personal virtues (temperance, etc.), and certainly the neglect of these virtues implies a deficiency of love to others.
 (Note on the nature of virtue.
  1 It may be our duty to regard other ends besides happiness.
  2 We actually disapprove certain dispositions without thinking of consequences.
  3 And approve others.)
 3 Apart from particular natures and circumstances, love includes all goodness; and
 4 Piety itself is the love of God, as an infinitely good Being.]

Romans xiii. 9.

And if there be any other commandment, it is briefly comprehended in this saying, namely, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Having already removed the prejudices against public spirit, or the love of our neighbour, on the side of private interest and self-love; I proceed to the particular explanation of the precept before us, by showing, who is our neighbour: in what sense we are required to love him as ourselves: the influence such love would have upon our behaviour in life; and lastly, how this commandment comprehends in it all others. INTRO

I. The objects and due extent of this affection will be understood by attending to the nature of it, and to the nature and circumstances of mankind in this world. The 1

love of our neighbour is the same with charity, benevolence, or goodwill: it is an affection to the good and happiness of our fellow-creatures. This implies in it a disposition to produce happiness: and this is the simple notion of goodness, which appears so amiable wherever we meet with it. From hence it is easy to see, that the perfection of goodness consists in love to the whole universe. This is the perfection of Almighty God.

But as man is so much limited in his capacity, as so small a part of the creation comes under his notice and influence, and as we are not used to consider things in so general a way; it is not to be thought of, that the universe should be the object of benevolence to such creatures as we are. Thus in that precept of our Saviour,[1] Be ye perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect, the perfection of the Divine goodness is proposed to our imitation as it is promiscuous, and extends to the evil as well as the good; not as it is absolutely universal, imitation of it in this respect being plainly beyond us. The object is too vast. For this reason moral writers also have substituted a less general object for our benevolence, mankind. But this likewise is an object too general, and very much out of our view, Therefore persons more practical have, instead of mankind, put our country; and made the principle of virtue, of human virtue, to consist in the entire uniform love of our country; and this is what we call a public spirit; which in men of public stations is the character of a patriot. But this is speaking to the upper part of the world. Kingdoms and governments are large; and the sphere of action of far the greatest part of mankind is much narrower than the government they live under; or however, common men do not consider their actions as affecting the whole community of which they are members. There plainly is wanting a less general and nearer object of benevolence for the bulk of men, than that of their country. Therefore the Scripture, not being a book of theory and speculation, but a plain rule of life for mankind, has with the utmost possible propriety put the principle of virtue upon the love of our neighbour; which is that part of the universe, that part of mankind, that part of our country, which comes under our immediate

[1] Matt. v. 48.

notice, acquaintance, and influence, and with which we have to do.

This is plainly the true account or reason, why our Saviour places the principle of virtue in the love of our neighbour; and the account itself shows who are comprehended under that relation.

II. Let us now consider in what sense we are commanded 2
to love our neighbour as ourselves.

This precept, in its first delivery by our Saviour, is thus introduced: Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy strength; and thy neighbour as thyself. These very different manners of expression do not lead our thoughts to the same measure or degree of love, common to both objects; but to one, peculiar to each. Supposing then, which is to be supposed, a distinct meaning and propriety in the words, as thyself; the precept we are considering will admit of any of these senses; that we bear the same kind of affection to our neighbour, as we do to ourselves; or, that the love we bear to our neighbour should have some certain proportion or other to self-love; or, lastly, that it should bear the particular proportion of equality, that it be in the same degree.

First. The precept may be understood as requiring only, that we have the same kind of affection to our fellow-creatures, as to ourselves; that, as every man has the principle of self-love, which disposes him to avoid misery, and consult his own happiness; so we should cultivate the affection of goodwill to our neighbour, and that it should influence us to have the same kind of regard to him. This at least must be commanded; and this will not only prevent our being injurious to him, but will also put us upon promoting his good. There are blessings in life, which we share in common with others; peace, plenty, freedom, healthful seasons. But real benevolence to our fellow-creatures would give us the notion of a common interest in a stricter sense; for in the degree we love one another, his interest, his joys and sorrows, are our own. It is from self-love that we form the notion of private good, and consider it as our own: love of our neighbour would teach us thus to appropriate to ourselves his good and welfare; to consider ourselves as having a real share in his happiness. Thus the principle of benevolence

would be an advocate within our own breasts, to take care of the interests of our fellow-creatures in all the interfering and competitions which cannot but be, from the imperfection of our nature, and the state we are in. It would likewise, in some measure, lessen that interfering; and hinder men from forming so strong a notion of private good, exclusive of the good of others, as we commonly do. Thus, as the private affection makes us in a peculiar manner sensible of humanity, justice, or injustice, when exercised towards ourselves; love of our neighbour would give us the same kind of sensibility in his behalf. This would be the greatest security of our uniform obedience to that most equitable rule; Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them.

All this is indeed no more than that we should have a real love to our neighbour: but then, which is to be observed, the words, as thyself, express this in the most distinct manner, and determine the precept to relate to the affection itself. The advantage, which this principle of benevolence has over other remote considerations, is that it is itself the temper of virtue; and likewise, that it is the chief, nay the only effectual security of our performing the several offices of kindness we owe to our fellow-creatures. When from distant considerations men resolve upon anything to which they have no liking, or perhaps an averseness, they are perpetually finding out evasions and excuses; which need never be wanting, if people look for them: and they equivocate with themselves in the plainest cases in the world. This may be in respect to single determinate acts of virtue: but it comes in much more, where the obligation is to a general course of behaviour; and most of all, if it be such as cannot be reduced to fixed determinate rules. This observation may account for the diversity of the expression, in that known passage of the prophet Micah: to do justly, and to love mercy. A man's heart must be formed to humanity and benevolence, he must love mercy, otherwise he will not act mercifully in any settled course of behaviour. As consideration of the future sanctions of religion is our only security of persevering in our duty, in cases of great temptations: so to get our heart and temper formed to a love and liking of what is good is absolutely necessary in order to our be-

having rightly in the familiar and daily intercourses amongst mankind.

Secondly. The precept before us may be understood to require, that we love our neighbour in some certain proportion or other, according as we love ourselves. And indeed a man's character cannot be determined by the love he bears to his neighbour, considered absolutely: but the proportion which this bears to self-love, whether it be attended to or not, is the chief thing which forms the character, and influences the actions. For as the form of the body is a composition of various parts; so likewise our inward structure is not simple or uniform, but a composition of various passions, appetites, affections, together with rationality; including in this last both the discernment of what is right, and a disposition to regulate ourselves by it. There is greater variety of parts in what we call a character, than there are features in a face: and the morality of that is no more determined by one part, than the beauty or deformity of this is by one single feature: each is to be judged of by all the parts or features, not taken singly, but together. In the inward frame the various passions, appetites, affections, stand in different respects to each other. The principles in our mind may be contradictory, or checks and allays only, or incentives and assistants to each other. And principles which in their nature have no kind of contrariety or affinity, may yet accidentally be each other's allays or incentives.

From hence it comes to pass, that though we were able to look into the inward contexture of the heart, and see with the greatest exactness in what degree any one principle is in a particular man; we could not from thence determine, how far that principle would go towards forming the character, or what influence it would have upon the actions, unless we could likewise discern what other principles prevailed in him, and see the proportion which that one bears to the others. Thus, though two men should have the affection of compassion in the same degree exactly; yet one may have the principle of resentment, or of ambition so strong in him, as to prevail over that of compassion, and prevent its having any influence upon his actions; so that he may deserve the character of an hard or cruel man: whereas the other, having compassion in just the same degree only, yet having resentment or

ambition in a lower degree, his compassion may prevail over them, so as to influence his actions, and to denominate his temper compassionate. So that, how strange soever it may appear to people who do not attend to the thing, yet it is quite manifest, that, when we say one man is more resenting or compassionate than another, this does not necessarily imply that one has the principle of resentment or of compassion stronger than the other. For if the proportion, which resentment or compassion bears to other inward principles, is greater in one than in the other; this is itself sufficient to denominate one more resenting or compassionate than the other.

Further, the whole system, as I may speak, of affections (including rationality) which constitute the heart, as this word is used in Scripture and on moral subjects, are each and all of them stronger in some than in others. Now the proportion which the two general affections, benevolence and self-love, bear to each other, according to this interpretation of the text, denominates men's character as to virtue. Suppose then one man to have the principle of benevolence in a higher degree than another: it will not follow from hence, that his general temper or character or actions will be more benevolent than the other's. For he may have self-love in such a degree as quite to prevail over benevolence; so that it may have no influence at all upon his actions; whereas benevolence in the other person, though in a lower degree, may yet be the strongest principle in his heart; and strong enough to be the guide of his actions, so as to denominate him a good and virtuous man. The case is here as in scales: it is not one weight, considered in itself, which determines whether the scale shall ascend or descend; but this depends upon the proportion which that one weight hath to the other.

It being thus manifest that the influence which benevolence has upon our actions, and how far it goes towards forming our character, is not determined by the degree itself of this principle in our mind; but the proportion it has to self-love and other principles: a comparison also being made in the text between self-love and the love of our neighbour; these joint considerations afforded sufficient occasion for treating here of that proportion: it plainly is implied in the precept, though it should be questioned whether it be the exact meaning of the words, as thyself.

Love of our neighbour then must bear some proportion to self-love, and virtue to be sure consists in the due proportion. What this due proportion is, whether as a principle in the mind, or as exerted in actions, can be judged of only from our nature and condition in this world. Of the degree in which affections and the principles of action, considered in themselves, prevail, we have no measure: let us then proceed to the course of behaviour, the actions they produce.

Both our nature and condition require, that each particular man should make particular provision for himself: and the inquiry, what proportion benevolence should have to self-love, when brought down to practice, will be, what is a competent care and provision for ourselves. And how certain soever it be, that each man must determine this for himself; and how ridiculous soever it would be for any to attempt to determine it for another: yet it is to be observed, that the proportion is real; and that a competent provision has a bound; and that it cannot be all which we can possibly get and keep within our grasp, without legal injustice. Mankind almost universally bring in, vanity, supplies for what is called a life of pleasure, covetousness, or imaginary notions of superiority over others, to determine this question: but every one who desires to act a proper part in society, would do well to consider, how far any of them come in to determine it, in the way of moral consideration. All that can be said is, supposing, what, as the world goes, is so much to be supposed that it is scarce to be mentioned, that persons do not neglect what they really owe to themselves; the more of their care and thought, and of their fortune they employ in doing good to their fellow-creatures, the nearer they come up to the law of perfection, Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

Thirdly, If the words, 'as thyself,' were to be understood of an equality of affection; it would not be attended with those consequences, which perhaps may be thought to follow from it. Suppose a person to have the same settled regard to others, as to himself; that in every deliberate scheme or pursuit he took their interest into the account in the same degree as his own, so far as an equality of affection would produce this; yet he would in fact, and ought to be, much more taken up and employed about himself, and his own

concerns, than about others, and their interests. For, besides the one common affection toward himself and his neighbour, he would have several other particular affections, passions, appetites, which he could not possibly feel in common both for himself and others: now these sensations themselves very much employ us; and have perhaps as great influence, as self-love. So far indeed as self-love, and cool reflection upon what is for our interest, would set us on work to gain a supply of our own several wants; so far the love of our neighbour would make us do the same for him: but the degree in which we are put upon seeking and making use of the means of gratification, by the feeling of those affections, appetites, and passions, must necessarily be peculiar to ourselves.

That there are particular passions (suppose shame, resentment) which men seem to have, and feel in common both for themselves and others, makes no alteration in respect to those passions and appetites which cannot possibly be thus felt in common. From hence (and perhaps more things of the like kind might be mentioned) it follows, that though there were an equality of affection to both, yet regards to ourselves would be more prevalent than attention to the concerns of others.

And from moral considerations it ought to be so, supposing still the equality of affection commanded: because we are in a peculiar manner, as I may speak, entrusted with ourselves; and therefore care of our own in terests,as well as of our conduct, particularly belongs to us.

To these things must be added, that moral obligations can extend no further than to natural possibilities. Now we have a perception of our own interests, like consciousness of our own existence, which we always carry about with us; and which, in its continuation, kind, and degree, seems impossible to be felt in respect to the interests of others.

From all these things it fully appears, that though we were to love our neighbour in the same degree as we love ourselves, so far as this is possible; yet the care of ourselves, of the individual, would not be neglected; the apprehended danger of which seems to be the only objection against understanding the precept in this strict sense.

3 III. The general temper of mind which the due love of

our neighbour would form us to, and the influence it would have upon our behaviour in life, is now to be considered.

The temper and behaviour of charity is explained at 1
large, in that known passage of St. Paul;[1] Charity suffereth long, and is kind; charity envieth not, doth not behave itself unseemly, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things. As to the meaning of the expressions, seeketh not her own, thinketh no evil, believeth all things; however those expressions may be explained away, this meekness, and, in some degree easiness of temper, readiness to forego our right for the sake of peace as well as in the way of compassion, freedom from mistrust, and disposition to believe well of our neighbour, this general temper, I say, accompanies and is plainly the effect of love and good-will. And, though such is the world in which we live, that experience and knowledge of it, not only may, but must beget in us greater regard to ourselves, and doubtfulness of the characters of others, than is natural to mankind; yet these ought not to be carried further than the nature and course of things make necessary. It is still true, even in the present state of things, bad as it is, that a real good man had rather be deceived, than be suspicious; had rather forego his known right, than run the venture of doing even a hard thing. This is the general temper of that charity, of which the apostle asserts, that if he had it not, giving his body to be burned would avail him nothing; and which, he says, shall never fail.

The happy influence of this temper extends to every different relation and circumstance in human life. It plainly renders a man better, more to be desired, as to all the respects and relations we can stand in to each other. The benevolent man is disposed to make use of all external advantages in such a manner, as shall contribute to the good of others, as well as to his own satisfaction. His own satisfaction consists in this. He will be easy and kind to his dependents, compassionate to the poor and distressed, friendly to all with whom he has to do. This includes the good neighbour, parent, master, magistrate; and such a behaviour would plainly make dependence, inferiority, and even servitude, easy. So that a good or charitable man of

[1] Cor. xiii.

superior rank in wisdom, fortune, authority, is a common blessing to the place he lives in; happiness grows under his influence. This good principle in inferiors would discover itself in paying respect, gratitude, obedience, as due. It were, therefore, methinks, one just way of trying one's own character, to ask ourselves, Am I in reality a better master or servant, a better friend, a better neighbour, than such and such persons; whom, perhaps, I may think not to deserve the character of virtue and religion so much as myself?

2 And as to the spirit of party, which unhappily prevails amongst mankind, whatever are the distinctions which serve for a supply to it, some or other of which have obtained in all ages and countries; one, who is thus friendly to his kind, will immediately make due allowances for it, as what cannot but be amongst such creatures as men, in such a world as this. And as wrath and fury and overbearing upon these occasions proceed, as I may speak, from men's feeling only on their own side; so a common feeling for others as well as for ourselves, would render us sensible to this truth, which it is strange can have so little influence; that we ourselves differ from others, just as much as they do from us. I put the matter in this way, because it can scarce be expected that the generality of men should see, that those things, which are made the occasions of dissension and fomenting the party spirit, are really nothing at all: but it may be expected from all people, how much soever they are in earnest about their respective peculiarities, that humanity, and common good-will to their fellow-creatures, should moderate and restrain that wretched spirit.

3 This good temper of charity likewise would prevent strife and enmity arising from other occasions: it would prevent our giving just cause of offence, and our taking it without cause. And in cases of real injury, a good man will make all allowances which are to be made; and, without any attempts of retaliation, he will only consult his own and other men's security for the future, against injustice and wrong.

4 IV. I proceed to consider lastly, what is affirmed of the precept now explained, that it comprehends in it all others; *i. e.*, that to love our neighbour as ourselves includes in it all virtues.

Now the way in which every maxim of conduct, or

general speculative assertion, when it is to be explained at large, should be treated, is, to show what are the particular truths which were designed to be comprehended under such a general observation, how far it is strictly true; and then the limitations, restrictions, and exceptions, if there be exceptions, with which it is to be understood. But it is only the former of these, namely, how far the assertion in the text holds, and the ground of the pre-eminence assigned to the precept of it, which in strictness comes into our present consideration.

However, in almost every thing that is said there is somewhat to be understood beyond what is explicitly laid down, and which we of course supply; somewhat, I mean, which would not be commonly called a restriction or limitation. Thus, when benevolence is said to be the sum of virtue, it is not spoken of as a blind propension, but as a principle in reasonable creatures, and so to be directed by their reason; for reason and reflection comes into our notion of a moral agent. And that will lead us to consider distant consequences, as well as the immediate tendency of an action; it will teach us, that the care of some persons, suppose children and families, is particularly committed to our charge by Nature and Providence; as also that there are other circumstances, suppose friendship or former obligations, which require that we do good to some, preferably to others. Reason considered merely as subservient to benevolence, as assisting to produce the greatest good, will teach us to have particular regard to these relations and circumstances; because it is plainly for the good of the world that they should be regarded. And as there are numberless cases in which, notwithstanding appearances, we are not competent judges, whether a particular action will upon the whole do good or harm; reason in the same way will teach us to be cautious how we act in these cases of uncertainty. It will suggest to our consideration, which is the safer side; how liable we are to be led wrong by passion and private interest; and what regard is due to laws, and the judgment of mankind. All these things must come into consideration, were it only in order to determine which way of acting is likely to produce the greatest good. Thus, upon supposition that it were in the strictest sense true, without limitation,

that benevolence includes in it all virtues; yet reason must come in as its guide and director, in order to attain its own end, the end of benevolence, the greatest public good. Reason then being thus included, let us now consider the truth of the assertion itself.

1 First, it is manifest that nothing can be of consequence to mankind or any creature, but happiness. This then is all which any person can, in strictness of speaking, be said to have a right to. We can therefore owe no man anything, but only to further and promote his happiness, according to our abilities. And therefore a disposition and endeavour to do good to all with whom we have to do, in the degree and manner which the different relations we stand in to them require, is a discharge of all the obligations we are under to them.

As human nature is not one simple uniform thing, but a composition of various parts; body, spirit, appetites, particular passions and affections; for each of which reasonable self-love would lead men to have due regard, and make suitable provision; so society consists of various parts, to which we stand in different respects and relations; and just benevolence would as surely lead us to have due regard to each of these, and behave as the respective relations require. Reasonable good-will, and right behaviour towards our fellow-creatures, are in a manner the same: only that the former expresseth the principle as it is in the mind; the latter, the principle as it were become external, *i. e.* exerted in actions.

And so far as temperance, sobriety, and moderation in sensual pleasures, and the contrary vices, have any respect to our fellow-creatures, any influence upon their quiet, welfare, and happiness; as they always have a real, and often a near influence upon it; so far it is manifest those virtues may be produced by the love of our neighbour, and that the contrary vices would be prevented by it. Indeed, if men's regard to themselves will not restrain them from excess; it may be thought little probable, that their love to others will be sufficient: but the reason is, that their love to others is not, any more than their regard to themselves, just, and in its due degree. There are however manifest instances of persons kept sober and temperate from regard to their affairs, and the welfare of those who depend upon them.

And it is obvious to every one, that habitual excess, a dissolute course of life, implies a general neglect of the duties we owe towards our friends, our families and our country.

From hence it is manifest that the common virtues, and the common vices of mankind, may be traced up to benevolence, or the want of it. And this entitles the precept, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself," to the pre-eminence given to it; and is a justification of the apostle's assertion, that all other commandments are comprehended in it; whatever cautions and restrictions[2] there are, which might

[2] For instance: As we are not competent judges, what is upon the whole, for the good of the world; there may be other immediate ends appointed us to pursue, besides that one of doing good, or producing happiness. Though the good of the creation be the only end of the author of it, yet he may have laid us under particular obligations, which we may discern and feel ourselves under, quite distinct from a perception, that the observance or violation of them is for the happiness or misery of our fellow-creatures (see Diss. ii. p. 332). And this is in fact the case. For there are certain dispositions of mind, and certain actions, which are in themselves approved or disapproved by mankind, abstracted from the consideration of their tendency to the happiness or misery of the world; approved or disapproved by reflection, by that principle within, which is the guide of life, the judge of right and wrong. Numberless instances of this kind might be mentioned. There are pieces of treachery, which in themselves appear base and detestable to every one. There are actions, which perhaps can scarce have any other general name given them than indecencies, which yet are odious and shocking to human nature. There is such a thing as meanness, a little mind; which, as it is quite distinct from incapacity, so it raises a dislike and disapprobation quite different from that contempt, which men are too apt to have, of mere folly. On the other hand; what we call greatness of mind, is the object of another sort of approbation, than superior understanding. Fidelity, honour, strict justice, are themselves approved in the highest degree, abstracted from the consideration of their tendency. Now, whether it be thought that each of these are connected with benevolence in our nature, and so may be considered as the same thing with it; or whether some of them be thought an inferior kind of virtues and vices, somewhat like natural beauties and deformities; or lastly, plain exceptions to the general rule; thus much however is certain, that the things now instanced, and numberless others, are approved or disapproved by mankind in general, in quite another view than as conducive to the happiness or misery of the world.

require to be considered, if we were to state particularly and at length, what is virtue and right behaviour in mankind. But,

2 Secondly, It might be added, that in a higher and more general way of consideration, leaving out the particular nature of creatures, and the particular circumstances in which they are placed, benevolence seems in the strictest sense to include in it all that is good and worthy; all that is good, which we have any distinct particular notion of. We have no clear conception of any positive moral attribute in the supreme Being, but what may be resolved up into goodness.[3] And, if we consider a reasonable creature or moral agent, without regard to the particular relations and circumstances in which he is placed; we cannot conceive anything else to come in towards determining whether he is to be ranked in a higher or lower class of virtuous beings, but the higher or lower degree in which that principle, and what is manifestly connected with it, prevail in him.

3 That which we more strictly call piety, or the love of God, and which is an essential part of a right temper, some may perhaps imagine no way connected with benevolence: yet surely they must be connected, if there be indeed in being an object infinitely good. Human nature is so constituted, that every good affection implies the love of itself; *i. e.* becomes the object of a new affection in the same person. Thus, to be righteous implies in it the love of righteousness; to be benevolent the love of benevolence; to be good the love of goodness; whether this righteousness, benevolence, or goodness, be viewed as in our own mind, or in another's: and the love of God as a Being perfectly good, is the love of perfect goodness contemplated in a being or person. Thus morality and religion,[4] virtue and piety, will at last necessarily coincide, run up into one and the same point, and love will be in all senses the end of the commandment.

"O almighty God, inspire us with this Divine principle;

[3] [Compare Anal. Pt. I. chap. ii. p. 39; and mark that the moral attributes of God are resolvable into goodness, only when he has viewed "without regard to particular relations." As governor, justice and veracity are distinct attributes of his, *consistent with goodness*; but not, in Butler's system, resolvable into it.]

[4] ["Morality is religion in practice, as religion is morality in principle."—*Wardlaw.*]

kill in us all the seeds of envy and ill-will; and help us, by cultivating within ourselves the love of our neighbour, to improve in the love of thee. Thou hast placed us in various kindreds, friendships, and relations, as the school of discipline for our affections: help us, by the due exercise of them, to improve to perfection; till all partial affection be lost in that entire universal one, and thou, O God, shalt be all in all."

SERMONS XIII., XIV.

UPON THE LOVE OF GOD.

[Love to God shown to be in the highest degree reasonable, from the constitution of man and the character of God (xiii.)

Love to God, as influenced in its exercise by man's present condition, and as perfected in heaven (xiv.)

INTRODUCTION.

- a One extreme leads to another; enthusiasm in religion to religion without feeling.
- b Love to God, a complex affection; explained.
- c Summary of the argument.

I Love to God shown to be reasonable.

1 From the constitution of man.

- a Affection adapted to its object; and resting in it, without exterior aim.
- b No doubt, the pursuit of objects of affection is often pleasurable; but in a perfect state there will be more pleasure in possession.
- c Some affections, moreover, imply approbation of them when reflected upon; as does the love of goodness. Hence the moral affection with which some objects are regarded.

2 From the character of God.

The case proved by supposing—

- a A creature perfect according to his nature; (1) in goodness, (2) in wisdom and in power, who is (3) moreover, brought into intimate relations with ourselves. From our nature, we love him, revere him, and desire his approval.
- b Suppose this creature our governor; and these affections are strengthened.

c Suppose him the Almighty God, and these affections are raised to the highest pitch. That he is not present to our senses can make no difference.

d Religion (it will be observed) brings into exercise no new affections; it but supplies the noblest objects to affections already possessed.

e Nor is there any contradiction between this love to God, and a regard for our own interest. Both may be exercised, independently, and at the same time.

f *One* God is the object of all the affections which love has been defined as comprehending, because though one he has different perfections.

II Love to God, as exercised in man's present condition, and as perfected in heaven.

Man's condition is imperfect; a condition of faith (not of sight), and of sin. Consider therefore—

1 The feelings appropriate to this condition:—They are Fear, Hope, and Love; and constitute the temper of Resignation. Resignation—

a How formed.

b How it influences practice.

c When it is perfected.

d How it expresses and strengthens itself through devotion.

2 The feelings appropriate to man's state of perfection in heaven.

a Love as already defined, will be perfected there.

b Men need objects of affection; and their happiness consists, not in the personal possession of such objects, but in the exercise of affections towards them.

c Such objects will be found in heaven, not in material or sensual things, but in the highest degree in God himself.

(1) As the most glorious representation of all beauty and order, he will excite our admiration:

(2) As a Being of almighty power, wisdom, and greatness, he will excite our reverence and trust:

(3) As a Being of infinite goodness, he will, in himself, be peculiarly dear:

(4) Especially when viewed in intimate relation to ourselves:

Happiness consisting in the gratification of our affections in these respects.

Summary—The whole shown to be Scriptural by quotations from the experience of inspired men.]

MATT. xxii. 37.

Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.

EVERYBODY knows, you therefore need only just be put INTRO
in mind, that there is such a thing as having so great horror of one extreme, as to run insensibly and of course a
into the contrary; and that a doctrine's having been a shelter for enthusiasm, or made to serve the purposes of superstition, is no proof of the falsity of it,[1] truth or right being somewhat real in itself, and so not to be judged of by its liableness to abuse, or by its supposed distance from or nearness to error. It may be sufficient to have mentioned this in general, without taking notice of the particular extravagances which have been vented under the pretence or endeavour of explaining the love of God, or how manifestly we are got into the contrary extreme, under the notion of a reasonable religion; so very reasonable, as to have nothing to do with the heart and affections, if these words signify anything but the faculty by which we discern speculative truth.

By the love of God I would understand all those regards, b
all those affections of mind which are due immediately to him from such a creature as man, and which rest in him as their end. As this does not include servile fear, so neither will any other regards, how reasonable soever, which respect anything out of or besides the perfection of the Divine nature come into consideration here. But all fear is not excluded, because his displeasure is itself the natural proper object of fear. Reverence, ambition of his love and approbation, delight in the hope or consciousness of it, come likewise into this definition of the love of God, because he is the natural object of all those affections or movements of mind, as really as he is the object of the affection, which is in the strictest sense called love; and all of them equally rest in him as their end. And they may all be understood to be implied in these words of our Saviour, without putting

[1] [See Preface to Sermons, p. 353. The theories referred to in this Introduction were advocated by Mad. Guyon and Fenelon, and opposed by Bossuet: See the History in Mackintosh's 'Progress of Ethical Philosophy,' Sec. V.]

any force upon them; for he is speaking of the love of G and our neighbour, as containing the whole of piety a virtue.

It is plain that the nature of man is so constituted as feel certain affections upon the sight or contemplation certain objects. Now the very notion of affection impli resting in its object as an end. And the particular affecti to good characters, reverence and moral love of them, natural to all those who have any degree of real goodness themselves. This will be illustrated by the description o perfect character in a creature, and by considering the ma ner in which a good man in his presence would be affecte towards such a character. He would, of course, feel tl affections of love, reverence, desire of his approbatio delight in the hope or consciousness of it. And surely a this is applicable, and may be brought up to that Being wh is infinitely more than an adequate object of all those affe tions; whom we are commanded to love with all our hear with all our soul, and with all our mind. And of thes regards towards Almighty God, some are more particularl suitable to and becoming so imperfect a creature as man, i this mortal state we are passing through; and some of them and perhaps other exercises of the mind, will be the employ ment and happiness of good men in a state of perfection.

This is a general view of what the following discourse wil contain. And it is manifest the subject is a real one; ther is nothing in it enthusiastical or unreasonable. And if it be indeed at all a subject, it is one of the utmost importance.

As mankind have a faculty by which they discern speculative truth, so we have various affections towards external objects, understanding and temper, reason and affection, are as distinct ideas as reason and hunger; and one would think could no more be confounded. It is by reason that we get the ideas of several objects of our affections; but in these cases reason and affection are no more the same, than sight of a particular object, and the pleasure or uneasiness consequent thereupon, are the same. Now, as reason tends to and rests in the discernment of truth, the object of it, so the very nature of affection consists in tending towards, and resting in its objects as an end. We do indeed often in common language say that things are loved, desired,

esteemed, not for themselves, but for somewhat further, somewhat out of and beyond them; yet, in these cases, whoever will attend will see that these things are not in reality the objects of the affections, *i. e.* are not loved, desired, esteemed, but the somewhat further and beyond them. If we have no affections which rest in what are called their objects, then what is called affection, love, desire, hope, in human nature, is only an uneasiness in being at rest—an unquiet disposition to action, progress, pursuit, without end or meaning. But if there be any such thing as delight in the company of one person, rather than of another; whether in the way of friendship, or mirth and entertainment, it is all one, if it be without respect to fortune, honour, or increasing our stores of knowledge, or anything beyond the present time; here is an instance of an affection absolutely resting in its object as its end, and being gratified in the same way as the appetite of hunger is satisfied with food. Yet nothing is more common than to hear it asked, what advantage a man hath in such a course, suppose of study, particular friendships, or in any other; nothing, I say, is more common than to hear such a question put in a way which supposes no gain, advantage or interest, but as a means to somewhat further: and if so, then there is no such thing at all as real interest, gain or advantage. This is the same absurdity with respect to life as an infinite series of effects without a cause is in speculation. The gain, advantage or interest consists in the delight itself, arising from such a faculty's having its object; neither is there any such thing as happiness or enjoyment, but what arises from hence. The pleasures of hope and of reflection are not exceptions; the former being only this happiness anticipated, the latter the same happiness enjoyed over again after its time. And even the general expectation of future happiness can afford satisfaction, only as it is a present object to the principle of self-love.

It was doubtless intended that life should be very much a pursuit to the gross of mankind. But this is carried so much further than is reasonable, that what gives immediate satisfaction, *i. e.* our present interest, is scarce considered as our interest at all. It is inventions which have only a remote tendency towards enjoyment, perhaps but a remote tendency

towards gaining the means only of enjoyment, which are chiefly spoken of as useful to the world. And though this way of thinking were just with respect to the imperfect state we are now in, where we know so little of satisfaction without satiety, yet it must be guarded against when we are considering the happiness of a state of perfection; which happiness being enjoyment and not hope, must necessarily consist in this, that our affections have their objects, and rest in those objects as an end, *i. e.* be satisfied with them. This will further appear in the sequel of this discourse.

Of the several affections or inward sensations which particular objects excite in man, there are some, the having of which implies the love of them when they are reflected upon.[2] This cannot be said of all our affections, principles, and motives of action. It were ridiculous to assert that a man upon reflection hath the same kind of approbation of the appetite of hunger, or the passion of fear, as he hath of good will to his fellow-creatures. To be a just, a good, a righteous man, plainly carries with it a peculiar affection to, or love of justice, goodness, righteousness, when these principles are the objects of contemplation. Now if a man approves of, or hath an affection to any principle in and for itself, incidental things allowed for, it will be the same whether he views it in his own mind or in another; in himself, or in his neighbour. This is the account of our approbation of our moral love and affection to good characters, which cannot but be in those who have any degrees of real goodness in themselves, and who discern and take notice of the same principle in others.

From observation of what passes within ourselves, our own actions, and the behaviour of others, the mind may carry on its reflections as far as it pleases; much beyond what we experience in ourselves, or discern in our fellow-creatures. It may go on, and consider goodness as become

[2] St. Austin observes, Amor ipse ordinate amandus est, quo bene amatur quod amandum est, ut sit in nobis virtus, quâ vivitur bene, *i. e.*, "The affection which we rightly have for what is lovely, must ordinate justly, in due manner, and proportion, become the object of a new affection, or be itself beloved, in order to our being endued with that virtue which is the principle of a good life." Civ Dei. L. 15. c 22.

a uniform continued principle of action, as conducted by reason, and forming a temper and character absolutely good and perfect, which is in a higher sense excellent, and proportionably the object of love and approbation.

Let us then suppose a creature perfect according to his created nature: let his form be human, and his capacities no more than equal to those of the chief of men. Goodness shall be his proper character, with wisdom to direct it, and power within some certain determined sphere of action to exert it; but goodness must be the simple actuating principle within him, this being the moral quality which is amiable, or the immediate object of love as distinct from other affections of approbation. Here, then, is a finite object for our mind to tend towards, to exercise itself upon; a creature perfect according to his capacity, fixed, steady, equally unmoved by weak pity or more weak fury and resentment; forming the justest scheme of conduct; going on undisturbed in the execution of it through the several methods of severity and reward, towards his end, namely, the general happiness of all with whom he hath to do, as in itself right and valuable. This character, though uniform in itself, in its principle, yet exerting itself in different ways, or considered in different views, may, by its appearing variety, move different affections. Thus, the severity of justice would not affect us in the same way as an act of mercy. The adventitious qualities of wisdom and power may be considered in themselves, and even the strength of mind which this immovable goodness supposes, may likewise be viewed as an object of contemplation distinct from the goodness itself. Superior excellence of any kind, as well as superior wisdom and power, is the object of awe and reverence to all creatures whatever their moral character be; but, so far as creatures of the lowest rank were good, so far the view of this character, as simply good, must appear amiable to them, be the object of or beget love. Further, suppose we were conscious that this superior person so far approved of us that we had nothing servilely to fear from him, that he was really our friend, and kind and good to us in particular, as he had occasional intercourse with us, we must be other creatures than we are, or we could not but feel the same kind of satisfaction and enjoyment (whatever would be the degree of it)

from this higher acquaintance and friendship as we feel from common ones, the intercourse being real, and the persons equally present, in both cases. We should have a more ardent desire to be approved by his better judgment, and a satisfaction in that approbation of the same sort with what would be felt in respect to common persons, or be wrought in us by their presence.

Let us now raise the character, and suppose this creature, for we are still going on with the supposition of a creature,
b our proper guardian and governor; that we were in a progress of being towards somewhat further, and that his scheme of government was too fast for our capacities to comprehend, remembering still that he is perfectly good and our friend as well as our governor. Wisdom, power, goodness, accidentally viewed anywhere, would inspire reverence, awe, love; and as these affections would be raised in higher or lower degrees, in proportion as we had occasionally more or less intercourse with the creature endued with those qualities, so this further consideration and knowledge that he was our proper guardian and governor, would much more bring these objects and qualities home to ourselves, teach us they had a greater respect to us in particular, that we had a higher interest in that wisdom and power and goodness. We should with joy, gratitude, reverence, love, trust, and dependence, appropriate the character as what we had a right in, and make our boast in such our relation to it; and the conclusion of the whole would be that we should refer ourselves implicitly to him, and cast ourselves entirely upon him. As the whole attention of life should be to obey his commands, so the highest enjoyment of it must arise from the contemplation of this character, and our relation to it, from a consciousness of his favour and approbation, and from the exercise of those affections towards him which could not but be raised from his presence. A being who has these attributes, who stands in this relation, and is thus sensibly present to the mind, must necessarily be the object of these affections; there is as real a correspondence between them as between the lowest appetite of sense and its object.

That this being is not a creature, but the Almighty God,
c that he is of infinite power and wisdom and goodness, does

not render him less the object of reverence and love than he would be if he had those attributes only in a limited degree. The Being who made us, and upon whom we entirely depend, is the object of some regards. He hath given us certain affections of mind which correspond to wisdom, power, goodness, *i. e.*, which are raised upon view of those qualities. If then he be really wise, powerful, good, he is the natural object of those affections which he hath endued us with, and which correspond to those attributes. That he is infinite in power, perfect in wisdom and goodness, makes no alteration, but only that he is the object of those affections raised to the highest pitch. He is not indeed to be discerned by any of our senses. "I go forward, but he is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive him: on the left hand, where he doth work, but I cannot behold him: he hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see him,—Oh that I knew where I might find him! that I might come even to his seat!"[3] But is He then afar off? Does he not fill heaven and earth with his presence? The presence of our fellow-creatures affects our senses, and our senses give us the knowledge of their presence, which hath different kinds of influence upon us—love, joy, sorrow, restraint, encouragement, reverence—however, this influence is not immediately from our senses, but from that knowledge. Thus suppose a person neither to see nor hear another, not to know by any of his senses, but yet certainly to know, that another was with him, this knowledge might, and in many cases would, have one or more of the effects before mentioned; it is, therefore, not only reasonable, but also natural, to be affected with a presence though it be not the object of our senses. Whether it be, or be not, is merely an accidental circumstance, which needs not come into consideration; it is the certainty that he is with us, and we with him, which hath the influence. We consider persons then as present, not only when they are within reach of our senses, but also when we are assured by any other means that they are within such a nearness; nay, if they are not, we can recall them to our mind, and be moved towards them at present; and must He, who is so much more intimately with us, that "in him we live and move and have our being,'

[3] Job xxiii. 3, 8, 9.

be thought too distant to be the object of our affections? We own and feel the force of amiable and worthy qualities in our fellow-creatures, and can we be insensible to the contemplation of perfect goodness? Do we reverence the shadows of greatness here below? are we solicitous about honour and esteem and the opinion of the world? And shall we not feel the same with respect to him whose are wisdom and power in the original, who "is the God of judgment by whom actions are weighed?" Thus love, reverence, desire of esteem, every faculty, every affection, tends towards, and is employed about its respective object in common cases; and must the exercise of them be suspended with regard to him alone who is an object, an infinitely more than adequate object, to our most exalted faculties; him, "of whom, and through whom, and to whom are all things?"

As we cannot remove from this earth, or change our general business on it, so neither can we alter our real na-
1 ture; therefore, no exercise of the mind can be recommended, but only the exercise of those faculties you are conscious of. Religion does not demand new affections, but only claims the direction of those you already have, those affections you daily feel, though unhappily confined to objects not altogether unsuitable, but altogether unequal to them. We only represent to you the higher, the adequate objects of those very faculties and affections. Let the man of ambition go on still to consider disgrace as the greatest evil—honour, as his chief good. But disgrace! in whose estimation? Honour! in whose judgment? This is the only question. If shame, and delight in esteem be spoken of as real, as any settled ground of pain or pleasure, both these must be in proportion to the supposed wisdom and worth of him by whom we are contemned or esteemed. Must it then be thought enthusiastical to speak of a sensibility of this sort which shall have respect to an unerring judgment, to infinite wisdom, when we are assured this unerring judgment, this infinite wisdom, does observe upon our actions?

2 It is the same with respect to the love of God in the strictest and most confined sense. We only offer and represent the highest object of an affection supposed already in your mind. Some degree of goodness must be previously supposed; this always implies the love of itself, an affection

to goodness; the highest, the adequate object of this affection, is perfect goodness, which, therefore, we are to love with all our heart, with all our soul, and with all our strength. "Must we, then, forgetting our own interest, as it were, go out of ourselves, and love God for his own sake?" No more forget your own interest, no more go out of yourselves than when you prefer one place, one prospect, the conversation of one man to that of another. Does not every affection necessarily imply that the object of it be itself loved? If it be not, it is not the object of the affection. You may, and ought if you can, but it is a great mistake to think you can love or fear or hate anything from consideration that such love or fear or hatred may be a means of obtaining good or avoiding evil; but the question whether we ought to love God for his sake, or for our own, being a mere mistake in language, the real question, which this is mistaken for, will, I suppose, be answered by observing that the goodness of God already exercised towards us, our present dependence upon him, and our expectation of future benefits, ought, and have a natural tendency, to beget in us the affection of gratitude, and greater love towards him, than the same goodness exercised towards others, were it only for this reason that every affection is moved in proportion to the sense we have of the object of it, and we cannot but have a more lively sense of goodness, when exercised towards ourselves, than when exercised towards others. I added expectation of future benefits, because the ground of that expectation is present goodness.

Thus Almighty God is the natural object of the several affections—love, reverence, fear, desire of approbation; for though he is simply one, yet we cannot but consider him in partial and different views. He is in himself one uniform Being, and for ever the same, without variableness or shadow of turning; but his infinite greatness, his goodness, his wisdom, are different objects to our mind. To which is to be added, that, from the changes in our own characters, together with his unchangeableness, we cannot but consider ourselves as more or less the objects of his approbation, and really be so, for if he approves what is good he cannot, merely from the unchangeableness of his nature, approve what is evil. Hence must arise more various movements of

mind, more different kinds of affections; and this greater variety also is just and reasonable in such creatures as we are, though it respects a Being simply one good and perfect. As some of these affections are most particularly suitable to so imperfect a creature as man, in this mortal state we are passing through, so there may be other exercises of mind, or some of these in higher degrees, our employment and happiness in a state of perfection.

XIV.

Consider then our ignorance, the imperfection of our nature, our virtue, and our condition in this world, with respect to an infinitely good and just Being, our Creator and Governor, and you will see what religious affections of mind are most particularly suitable to this mortal state we are passing through.

Though we are not affected with anything so strongly as what we discern with our senses, and though our nature and condition require that we be much taken up about sensible things, yet our reason convinces us that God is present with us, and we see and feel the effects of his goodness; he is, therefore, the object of some regards. The imperfection of our virtue, joined with the consideration of his absolute rectitude or holiness, will scarce permit that perfection of love which entirely casts out all fear; yet goodness is the object of love to all creatures who have any degree of it themselves, and consciousness of a real endeavour to approve ourselves to him, joined with the consideration of his goodness, as it quite excludes servile dread and horror, so it is plainly a reasonable ground for hope of his favour. Neither fear, nor hope, nor love then are excluded, and one or another of these will prevail, according to the different views we have of God, and ought to prevail according to the changes we find in our own character. There is a temper of mind made up of, or which follows from all three—fear, hope, love, namely, resignation to the Divine will, which is the general temper belonging to this state, which ought to be the habitual frame of our mind and heart, and to be exercised at proper seasons more distinctly in acts of devotion.

Resignation to the will of God is the whole of piety; it

includes in it all that is good, and is a source of the most settled quiet and composure of mind. There is the general principle of submission in our nature. Man is not so constituted as to desire things, and be uneasy in the want of them, in proportion to their known value; many other considerations come in to determine the degrees of desire, particularly whether the advantage we take view of be within the sphere of our rank. Who ever felt uneasiness a
upon observing any of the advantages brute creatures have over us? and yet it is plain they have several. It is the same with respect to advantages belonging to creatures of a superior order; thus, though we see a thing to be highly valuable, yet that it does not belong to our condition of being is sufficient to suspend our desires after it, to make us rest satisfied without such advantage. Now there is just the same reason for quiet resignation in the want of everything equally unattainable and out of our reach in particular, though others of our species be possessed of it. All this may be applied to the whole of life, to positive inconveniences as well as wants; not indeed to the sensations of pain and sorrow, but to all the uneasinesses of reflection, murmuring, and discontent. This is human nature formed to compliance, yielding, submission of temper. We find the principles of it within us, and every one exercises it towards some objects or other, *i. e.*, feels it with regard to some persons and some circumstances. Now this is an excellent foundation of a reasonable and religious resignation. Nature teaches and inclines us to take up with our lot; the consideration that the course of things is unalterable hath a tendency to quiet the mind under it, to beget a submission of temper to it; but when we can add that this unalterable course is appointed and continued by Infinite wisdom and goodness, how absolute should be our submission, how entire our trust and dependence?

This would reconcile us to our condition, prevent all the su- b
pernumerary troubles arising from imagination, distant fears, impatience; all uneasiness, except that which necessarily arises from the calamities themselves we may be under. How many of our cares should we by this means be disburdened of? Cares not properly our own, how apt soever they may be to intrude upon us and we to admit them the anxieties

of expectation, solicitude about success and disappointment, which, in truth, are none of our concern. How open to every gratification would that mind be which was clear of these incumbrances?

Our resignation to the will of God may be said to be perfect when our will is lost and resolved up into His; when we rest in his will as our end, as being itself most just, and right, and good; and where is the impossibility of such an affection to what is just, and right, and good, such a loyalty of heart to the Governor of the Universe as shall prevail over all sinister indirect desires of our own? Neither is this at bottom anything more than faith, and honesty, and fairness of mind, in a more enlarged sense, indeed, than those words are commonly used; and as, in common cases, fear and hope and other passions are raised in us by their respective objects, so this submission of heart and soul and mind, this religious resignation, would be as naturally produced by our having just conceptions of Almighty God and a real sense of his presence with us. In how low a degree soever this temper usually prevails amongst men, yet it is a temper right in itself; it is what we owe to our Creator, it is particularly suitable to our mortal condition, and to what we should endeavour after for our own sakes in our passage through such a world as this, where is nothing upon which we can rest or depend, nothing but what we are liable to be deceived and disappointed in. Thus we might acquaint ourselves with God and be at peace. This is piety and religion in the strictest sense, considered as a habit of mind, an habitual sense of God's presence with us, being affected towards him, as present, in the manner his superior nature requires from such a creature as man. This is to walk with God.

Little more need be said of devotion or religious worship than that it is this temper exerted into act. The nature of it consists in the actual exercise of those affections towards God which are supposed habitual in good men. He is always equally present with us, but we are so much taken up with sensible things that, "Lo, he goeth by me, and I see him not; he passeth on also, but I perceive him not."[1] Devo-

[1] Job ix. 11.

tion is retirement from the world he has made to him alone; it is to withdraw from the avocations of sense, to employ our attention wholly upon him as upon an object actually present, to yield ourselves up to the influence of the Divine Presence, and to give full scope to the affections of gratitude, love, reverence, trust, and dependence, of which Infinite power, wisdom, and goodness is the natural and only adequate object. We may apply to the whole of devotion those words of the son of Sirach, "When you glorify the Lord exalt him as much as you can, for even yet will he far exceed; and when you exalt him put forth all your strength and be not weary, for you can never go far enough."[a] Our most raised affections of every kind cannot but fall short and be disproportionate when an infinite Being is the object of them. This is the highest exercise and employment of mind that a creature is capable of. As this divine service and worship is itself absolutely due to God, so also is it necessary, in order to a further end, to keep alive upon our minds a sense of his authority, a sense that in our ordinary behaviour amongst men we act under him as our Governor and Judge.

Thus you see the temper of mind respecting God, which is particularly suitable to a state of imperfection, to creatures in a progress of being towards somewhat further.

Suppose now this something further attained, that we were arrived at it; what a perception will it be to see and know and feel that our trust was not vain, our dependence not groundless? That the issue, event, and consummation came out such as fully to justify and answer that resignation? If the obscure view of the Divine perfection which we have in this world ought in just consequence to beget an entire resignation, what will this resignation be exalted into when we shall see face to face and know as we are known? If we cannot form any distinct notion of that perfection of the love of God which casts out all fear, of that enjoyment of him which will be the happiness of good men hereafter, the consideration of our wants and capacities of happiness, and that he will be an adequate supply to them, must serve us instead of such distinct conception of the particular happiness itself.

[a] Ecclus. xliii. 30

Let us, then, suppose a man entirely disengaged from business and pleasure, sitting down alone and at leisure, to
b reflect upon himself and his own condition of being. He would immediately feel that he was by no means complete of himself, but totally insufficient for his own happiness. One may venture to affirm that every man hath felt this whether he hath again reflected upon it or not. It is feeling this deficiency that they are unsatisfied with themselves which makes men look out for assistance from abroad, and which has given rise to various kinds of amusements altogether needless any otherwise than as they serve to fill up the blank spaces of time, and so hinder their feeling this deficiency and being uneasy with themselves. Now, if these external things we take up with were really an adequate supply to this deficiency of human nature, if by their means our capacities and desires were all satisfied and filled up, then it might be truly said that we had found out the proper happiness of man, and so might sit down satisfied and be at rest in the enjoyment of it; but if it appears that the amusements which men usually pass their time in are so far from coming up to, or answering our notions and desires of happiness or good, that they are really no more than what they are commonly called, somewhat to pass away the time, *i. e.*, somewhat which serves to turn us aside from and prevent our attending to this our internal poverty and want; if they serve only, or chiefly to suspend, instead of satisfying our conceptions and desires of happiness; if the want remains, and we have found out little more than barely the means of making it less sensible, then are we still to seek for somewhat to be an adequate supply to it. It is plain that there is a capacity in the nature of man which neither riches, nor honours, nor sensual gratifications, nor anything in this world can perfectly fill up or satisfy, there is a deeper and more essential want than any of these things can be the supply of; yet surely there is a possibility of somewhat which may fill up our capacities of happiness; somewhat in which our souls may find rest: somewhat which may be to us that satisfactory good we are inquiring after, but it cannot be anything which is valuable only as it tends to some further end. Those, therefore, who have got this world so much into their hearts as not to be able to consider

happiness as consisting in anything but property and possessions, which are only valuable as the means to somewhat else, cannot have the least glimpse of the subject before us, which is the end, not the means, the thing itself, not somewhat in order to it; but if you can lay aside that general, confused, undeterminate notion of happiness, as consisting in such possessions, and fix in your thoughts that it really can consist in nothing but in a faculty's having its proper object, you will clearly see that, in the coolest way of consideration, without either the heat of fanciful enthusiasm or the warmth of real devotion, nothing is more certain than that an infinite Being may himself be, if he pleases, the supply to all the capacities of our nature. All the common enjoyments of life are from the faculties he hath endued us with, and the objects he hath made suitable to them. He may himself be to us infinitely more than all these; he may be to us all that we want. As our understanding can contemplate itself, and our affections be exercised upon themselves by reflection, so may each be employed in the same manner upon any other mind; and since the Supreme Mind, the Author and Cause of all things, is the highest possible object to himself, he may be an adequate supply to all the faculties of our souls, a subject to our understanding, and an object to our affections.

Consider, then, when we shall have put off this mortal body, when we shall be divested of sensual appetites, and those possessions which are now the means of gratification shall be of no avail; when this restless scene of business and vain pleasures which now diverts us from ourselves shall be all over, we, our proper self, shall still remain; we shall still continue the same creatures we are, with wants to be supplied and capacities of happiness. We must have faculties of perception, though not sensitive ones, and pleasure or uneasiness from our perceptions, as now we have.

There are certain ideas which we express by the words order, harmony, proportion, beauty, the furthest removed from anything sensual. Now what is there in those intellectual images, forms, or ideas which begets that approbation, love, delight, and even rapture, which is seen in some person's faces upon having those objects present to their minds?—"Mere enthusiasm!" Be it what it will, there are

objects, works of nature and of art, which all mankind have delight from, quite distinct from their affording gratification to sensual appetites, and from quite another view of them, than as being for their interest and further advantage. The faculties from which we are capable of these pleasures, and the pleasures themselves, are as natural, and as much to be accounted for, as any sensual appetite whatever and the pleasure from its gratification. Words, to be sure, are wanting upon this subject: to say that everything of grace and beauty throughout the whole of Nature, everything excellent and amiable shared in differently lower degrees by the whole creation, meet in the Author and Cause of all things; this is an inadequate, and perhaps improper way, of speaking of the Divine Nature, but it is manifest that absolute rectitude, the perfection of being, must be in all senses and in every respect the highest object to the mind.

(2) In this world it is only the effects of wisdom and power and greatness which we discern; it is not impossible that hereafter the qualities themselves in the Supreme Being may be the immediate object of contemplation. What amazing wonders are opened to view by late improvements! What an object is the universe to a creature, if there be a creature who can comprehend its system! But it must be an infinitely higher exercise of the understanding to view the scheme of it in that Mind which projected it before its foundations were laid; and surely we have meaning to the words when we speak of going further, and viewing, not only this system in his mind, but the wisdom and intelligence itself from whence it proceeded. The same may be said of power; but since wisdom and power are not God, he is a wise, a powerful Being; the Divine nature may, therefore, be a further object to the understanding. It is nothing to observe that our senses give us but an imperfect knowledge of things; effects themselves, if we knew them thoroughly, would give us but imperfect notions of wisdom and power, much less of his being, in whom they reside. I am not speaking of any fanciful notion of seeing all things in God, but only representing to you how much a higher object to the understanding an infinite Being himself is than the things which he has made, and this is no more than saying that the Creator is superior to the works of his hands.

This may be illustrated by a low example: suppose a machine, the sight of which would raise, and discoveries in its contrivance gratify, our curiosity, the real delight, in this case, would arise from its being the effect of skill and contrivance. This skill in the mind of the artificer would be a higher object if we had any senses or ways to discern it; for, observe, the contemplation of that principle, faculty, or power which produced any effect must be a higher exercise of the understanding than the contemplation of the effect itself. The cause must be a higher object to the mind than the effect.

But whoever considers distinctly what the delight of knowledge is, will see reason to be satisfied that it cannot be the chief good of man; all this, as it is applicable, so it was mentioned with regard to the attribute of goodness. (3
I say, goodness; our being and all our enjoyments are the effects of it. Just men bear its resemblance, but how little do we know of the original, of what it is in itself? Recall what was before observed concerning the affection to moral characters, which, in how low a degree soever, yet is plainly natural to man and the most excellent part of his nature. Suppose this improved, as it may be improved to any degree whatever, in the spirits of just men made perfect, and then suppose that they had a real view of that righteousness which is an everlasting righteousness; of the conformity of the Divine will to the law of truth, in which the moral attributes of God consist; of that goodness in the sovereign mind which gave birth to the universe: add, what will be true of all good men hereafter, a consciousness of having an interest in what they are contemplating. Suppose them able to say, "This God is our God for ever and ever," would they be any longer to seek for what was their chief happiness, their final good? Could the utmost stretch of their capacities look further? Would not infinite perfect goodness be their very end, the last end and object of their affections, beyond which they could neither have nor desire, beyond which they could not form a wish or thought?

Consider wherein that presence of a friend consists, which (4
has often so strong an effect, as wholly to possess the mind, and entirely suspend all other affections and regards; and which itself affords the highest satisfaction and enjoyment.

He is within reach of the senses. Now, as our capacities of perception improve, we shall have, perhaps by some faculty entirely new, a perception of God's presence with us in a nearer and stricter way; since it is certain he is more intimately present with us, than anything else can be. Proof of the existence and presence of any being is quite different from the immediate perception, the consciousness of it. What then will be the joy of heart, which his presence, and the light of his countenance, who is the life of the universe, will inspire good men with, when they shall have a sensation, that he is the Sustainer of their being, that they exist in him; when they shall feel his influence to cheer and enliven and support their frame, in a manner of which we have now no conception? He will be in a literal sense their strength and their portion for ever.

When we speak of things so much above our comprehension, as the employment and happiness of a future state, doubtless it behoves us to speak with all modesty and distrust of ourselves. But the Scripture represents the happiness of that state under the notions of seeing God, seeing him as he is, knowing as we are known, and seeing face to face. These words are not general or undetermined, but express a particular determinate happiness. And I will be bold to say, that nothing can account for, or come up to these expressions, but only this, that God himself will be an object to our faculties, that he himself will be our happiness; as distinguished from the enjoyments of the present state, which seem to arise, not immediately from him, but from the objects he has adapted to give us delight.

Summ. To conclude: Let us suppose a person tired with care and sorrow and the repetition of vain delights which fill up the round of life; sensible that everything here below in its best estate is altogether vanity. Suppose him to feel that deficiency of human nature, before taken notice of; and to be convinced that God alone was the adequate supply to it. What could be more applicable to a good man, in this state of mind; or better express his present wants and distant hopes, his passage through this world as a progress towards a state of perfection, than the following passages in the devotions of the royal prophet? They are plainly in a higher and more proper sense applicable to this, than they

could be to anything else. "I have seen an end of all perfection. Whom have I in heaven but Thee? and there is none upon earth that I desire in comparison of thee. My flesh and my heart faileth: but God is the strength of my heart, and my portion for ever. Like as the hart desireth the water-brooks, so longeth my soul after thee, O God. My soul is athirst for God, yea, even for the living God: when shall I come to appear before him? How excellent is thy loving-kindness, O God! and the children of men shall put their trust under the shadow of thy wings. They shall be satisfied with the plenteousness of thy house: and thou shalt give them drink of thy pleasures, as out of the river. For with thee is the well of life: and in thy light shall we see light. Blessed is the man whom thou choosest, and receivest unto thee: he shall dwell in thy court, and shall be satisfied with the pleasures of thy house, even of thy holy temple. Blessed is the people, O Lord, that can rejoice in thee: they shall walk in the light of thy countenance. Their delight shall be daily in thy name, and in thy righteousness shall they make their boast. For thou art the glory of their strength: and in thy loving-kindness they shall be exalted. As for me, I will behold thy presence in righteousness; and when I awake up after thy likeness, I shall be satisfied with it. Thou shalt show me the path of life; in thy presence is the fulness of joy, and at thy right hand there is pleasure for evermore."

SERMON XV.[1]

UPON THE IGNORANCE OF MAN.

ECCLES. viii. 16, 17.

When I applied mine heart to know wisdom, and to see the business that is done upon the earth: Then I beheld all the work of God, that a man cannot find out the work that is done under the

[1] [One of the most impressive examples of Butler's wisdom. Many of the thoughts given here are expanded in the Analogy.]

sun: because though a man labour to seek it out, yet he shall not find it; yea further, though a wise man think to know it, yet shall he not be able to find it.

The writings of Solomon are very much taken up with reflections upon human nature, and human life; to which he hath added, in this book, reflections upon the constitution of things. And it is not improbable, that the little satisfaction, and the great difficulties he met with in his researches into the general constitution of Nature, might be the occasion of his confining himself, so much as he hath done, to life and conduct. However, upon that joint review he expresses great ignorance of the works of God, and the method of his providence in the government of the world; great labour and weariness in the search and observation he had employed himself about: and great disappointment, pain, and even vexation of mind, upon that which he had remarked of the appearances of things, and of what was going forward upon this earth. This whole review and inspection, and the result of it, sorrow, perplexity, a sense of his necessary ignorance, suggests various reflections to his mind. But, notwithstanding all this ignorance and dissatisfaction, there is somewhat upon which he assuredly rests and depends, somewhat, which is the conclusion of the whole matter, and the only concern of man. Following this his method and train of reflection, let us consider,

I. The assertion of the text, the ignorance of man; that the wisest and most knowing cannot comprehend the ways and works of God: and then,

II. What are the just consequences of this observation and knowledge of our own ignorance, and the reflections which it leads us to.

I. The wisest and most knowing cannot comprehend the works of God, the methods and designs of his providence in the creation and government of the world.

Creation is absolutely and entirely out of our depth, and beyond the extent of our utmost reach. And yet it is as certain that God made the world, as it is certain that effects must have a cause. It is indeed in general no more than effects, that the most knowing are acquainted with: for as to causes, they are as entirely in the dark as the most ignorant. What are the laws by which matter acts upon matter,

but certain effects; which some, having observed to be frequently repeated, have reduced to general rules?[2] The real nature and essence of beings likewise is what we are altogether ignorant of. All these things are so entirely out of our reach, that we have not the least glimpse of them. And we know little more of ourselves, than we do of the world about us: how we were made, how our being is continued and preserved, what the faculties of our minds are, and upon what the power of exercising them depends. "I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvellous are thy works, and that my soul knoweth right well." Our own nature, and the objects we are surrounded with, serve to raise our curiosity; but we are quite out of a condition of satisfying it. Every secret which is disclosed, every discovery which is made, every new effect which is brought to view, serves to convince us of numberless more which remain concealed, and which we had before no suspicion of. And what if we were acquainted with the whole creation, in the same way and as thoroughly as we are with any single object in it? What would all this natural knowledge amount to? it must be a low curiosity indeed which such superficial knowledge could satisfy. On the contrary, would it not serve to convince us of our ignorance still; and to raise our desire of knowing the nature of things themselves, the author, the cause, and the end of them?

As to the government of the world: though from consideration of the final causes which come within our knowledge; of characters, personal merit and demerit; of the favour and disapprobation, which respectively are due and belong to the righteous and the wicked, and which therefore must necessarily be in a mind which sees things as they really are; though I say, from hence we may know somewhat concerning the designs of Providence in the government of the world, enough to enforce upon us religion and the practice of virtue: yet, since the monarchy of the universe is a dominion unlimited in extent, and everlasting in duration; the general system of it must necessarily be quite beyond our comprehension. And, since there appears such a subor-

[2] [This sentence contains an accurate definition of Law, as used in natural science. It is no force or power, but simply a generalized fact.]

dination and reference of the several parts to each other, as to constitute it properly one administration or government; we cannot have a thorough knowledge of any part, without knowing the whole. This surely should convince us, that we are much less competent judges of the very small part which comes under our notice in this world, than we are apt to imagine. "No heart can think upon these things worthily; and who is able to conceive his way? it is a tempest which no man can see: for the most part of his works are hid. Who can declare the works of his justice? for his covenant is afar off, and the trial of all things is in the end:" *i. e.* the dealings of God with the children of men are not yet completed, and cannot be judged of by that part which is before us. "So that a man cannot say, this is worse than that: for in time they shall be well approved. Thy faithfulness, O Lord, reacheth unto the clouds: thy righteousness standeth like the strong mountains: thy judgments are like the great deep. He hath made everything beautiful in his time: Also he hath set the world in their heart; so that no man can find out the work that God maketh from the beginning to the end." And thus St. Paul concludes a long argument upon the various dispensations of Providence: "O the depth of the riches, both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! for who hath known the mind of the Lord?"

Thus the scheme of Providence, the ways and works of God, are too vast, of too large extent for our capacities.[3] There is, as I may speak, such an expense of power, and wisdom, and goodness in the formation and government of the world, as is too much for us to take in or comprehend. Power, and wisdom, and goodness are manifest to us in all those works of God, which come within our view: but there are likewise infinite stores of each, poured forth throughout the immensity of the creation; no part of which can be thoroughly understood, without taking in its reference and respect to the whole: and this is what we have not faculties for.

And as the works of God, and his scheme of government,

[3] [See Anal. Pt. I. chap. vii., and Pt. II. chap. iv.]

are above our capacities thoroughly to comprehend: so there possibly may be reasons which originally made it fit that many things should be concealed from us, which we have perhaps natural capacities of understanding: many things concerning the designs, methods and ends of Divine Providence in the government of the world. There is no manner of absurdity in supposing a veil, on purpose drawn over some scenes of infinite power, wisdom, and goodness, the sight of which might some way or other strike us too strongly; or that better ends are designed and served by their being concealed, than could be by their being exposed to our knowledge. The Almighty may cast clouds and darkness round about him, for reasons and purposes of which we have not the least glimpse or conception.

However, it is surely reasonable, and what might have been expected, that creatures in some stage of their being, suppose in the infancy of it,[4] should be placed in a state of discipline and improvement, where their patience and submission is to be tried by afflictions, where temptations are to be resisted, and difficulties gone through in the discharge of their duty. Now if the greatest pleasures and pains of the present life may be overcome and suspended, as they manifestly may, by hope and fear, and other passions and affections; then the evidence of religion,[5] and the sense of the consequences of virtue and vice, might have been such as entirely in all cases to prevail over those afflictions, difficulties and temptations; prevail over them, so as to render them absolutely none at all. But the very notion itself now mentioned, of a state of discipline and improvement, necessarily excludes such sensible evidence and conviction of religion, and of the consequences of virtue and vice. Religion consists in submission and resignation to the Divine will.[6] Our condition in this world is a school of exercise for this temper:[7] and our ignorance, the shallowness of our reason, the temptations, difficulties, afflictions, which we are exposed to, all equally contribute to make it so. The general observation may be carried on, and whoever will attend to the thing will plainly see, that less sensible evidence, with less

[4] [Anal. Pt. I. chap. iv.]

[5] [Anal. Pt. II. p. 297.]

[6] [Ser. xiv.]

[7] [Anal. Pt. I. chap. iv.]

difficulty in practice, is the same, as more sensible evidence with greater difficulty in practice. Therefore difficulties in speculation as much come into the notion of a state of discipline, as difficulties in practice:[8] and so the same reason or account is to be given of both. Thus, though it is indeed absurd to talk of the greater merit of assent, upon little or no evidence, than upon demonstration; yet the strict discharge of our duty, with less sensible evidence, does imply in it a better character, than the same diligence in the discharge of it upon more sensible evidence. This fully accounts for and explains that assertion of our Saviour, "Blessed are they that have not seen, and yet have believed;[9] have become Christians and obeyed the gospel, upon less sensible evidence, than that which Thomas, to whom he is speaking, insisted upon.

But after all, the same account is to be given, why we were placed in these circumstances of ignorance, as why nature has not furnished us with wings; namely, that we were designed to be inhabitants of this earth. I am afraid we think too highly of ourselves; of our rank in the creation, and of what is due to us. What sphere of action, what business is assigned to man, that he has not capacities and knowledge fully equal to? It is manifest he has reason, and knowledge, and faculties superior to the business of the present world: faculties which appear superfluous, if we do not take in the respect which they have to somewhat further, and beyond it. If to acquire knowledge were our proper end, we should indeed be but poorly provided: but if somewhat else be our business and duty, we may, notwithstanding our ignorance, be well enough furnished for it; and the observation of our ignorance may be of assistance to us in the discharge of it.

II. Let us then consider, what are the consequences of this knowledge and observation of our own ignorance, and the reflection it leads to.

First, We may learn from it, with what temper of mind a man ought to inquire into the subject of religion; namely, with expectation of finding difficulties, and with a disposition to take up and rest satisfied with any evidence whatever, which is real.

[8] [Anal. Pt. II. chap. vi. p. 241.] [9] John xx. 29.

He should beforehand expect things mysterious, and such as he will not be able thoroughly to comprehend, or go to the bottom of. To expect a distinct comprehensive view of the whole subject, clear of difficulties and objections, is to forget our nature and condition; neither of which admit of such knowledge, with respect to any science whatever. And to inquire with this expectation, is not to inquire as a man, but as one of another order of creatures.

Due sense of the general ignorance of man would also beget in us a disposition to take up and rest satisfied with any evidence whatever, which is real. I mention this as the contrary to a disposition, of which there are not wanting instances, to find fault with and reject evidence, because it is not such as was desired.[10] If a man were to walk by twilight, must he not follow his eyes as much as if it were broad day and clear sunshine? Or if he were obliged to take a journey by night, would he not give heed to any light shining in the darkness, till the day should break and the day-star arise? It would not be altogether unnatural for him to reflect how much better it were to have day-light; he might perhaps have great curiosity to see the country round about him; he might lament that the darkness concealed many extended prospects from his eyes, and wish for the sun to draw away the veil; but how ridiculous would it be, to reject with scorn and disdain the guidance and direction which that lesser light might afford him, because it was not the sun itself! if the make and constitution of man, the circumstances he is placed in, or the reason of things affords the least hint or intimation, that virtue is the law he is born under; scepticism itself should lead him to the most strict and inviolable practice of it; that he may not make the dreadful experiment, of leaving the course of life marked out for him by nature, whatever that nature be, and entering paths of his own, of which he can know neither the dangers nor the end. For though no danger be seen, yet darkness, ignorance and blindness are no manner of security.

Secondly, our ignorance is the proper answer to many things which are called objections against religion,[11] particularly to those which arise from the appearances of evil and irregularity in the constitution of Nature and the government

[10] [Anal. Pt. II chap. vi.] [11] [Anal. Pt. II. chap. iv.]

of the world. In all other cases it is thought necessary to be thoroughly acquainted with the whole of the scheme, even one of so narrow a compass as those which are formed by men, in order to judge of the goodness or badness of it; and the most slight and superficial view of any human contrivance comes abundantly nearer to a thorough knowledge of it than that part which we know of the government of the world does to the general scheme and system of it, to the whole set of laws by which it is governed. From our ignorance of the constitution of things, and the scheme of providence in the government of the world; from the reference the several parts have to each other, and to the whole, and from our not being able to see the end of the whole, it follows that however perfect things are they must even necessarily appear to us otherwise less perfect than they are.[18]

[18] Suppose some very complicated piece of work, some system or constitution, formed for some general end, to which each of the parts had a reference. The perfection or justness of this work or constitution would consist in the reference and respect, which the several parts have to the general design. This reference of parts to the general design may be infinitely various, both in degree and kind. Thus one part may only contribute and be subservient to another; this to a third; and so on through a long series, the last part of which alone may contribute immediately and directly to the general design. Or a part may have this distant reference to the general design, and may also contribute immediately to it. For instance: If the general design or end, for which the complicated frame of Nature was brought into being, is happiness; whatever affords present satisfaction, and likewise tends to carry on the course of things, hath this double respect to the general design. Now suppose a spectator of that work or constitution was in a great measure ignorant of such various reference to the general end, whatever that end be; and that, upon a very slight and partial view which he had of the work, several things appeared to his eye as disproportionate and wrong; others, just and beautiful. What would he gather from these appearances? He would immediately conclude there was a probability, if he could see the whole reference of the parts appearing wrong to the general design, that this would destroy the appearance of wrongness and disproportion. But there is no probability, that the reference would destroy the particular right appearances, though that reference might show the thing

Thirdly, since the constitution of Nature, and the methods and designs of Providence in the government of the world, are above our comprehension, we should acquiesce in, and rest satisfied with, our ignorance, turn our thoughts from that which is above and beyond us, and apply ourselves to that which is level to our capacities, and which is our real business and concern. Knowledge is not our proper happiness. Whoever will in the least attend to the thing will see that it is the gaining, not the having of it, which is the entertainment of the mind; indeed, if the proper happiness of man consisted in knowledge, considered as a possession or treasure, men who are possessed of the largest share would have a very ill time of it, as they would be infinitely more sensible than others of their poverty in this respect; thus he who increases knowledge would eminently increase sorrow. Men of deep research and curious inquiry should just be put in mind not to mistake what they are doing. If their discoveries serve the cause of virtue and religion in the way of proof, motive to practice, or assistance in it, or if they tend to render life less unhappy, and promote its satisfactions, then they are most usefully employed; but bringing things to light, alone and of itself, is of no manner of use any otherwise than as an entertainment or diversion. Neither is this at all amiss if it does not take up the time which should be employed in better work; but it is evident that there is another mark set up for us to aim at, another end appointed us to direct our lives to; an end which the most knowing may fail of and the most ignorant arrive at. "The secret things belong unto the Lord our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for

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already appearing just, to be so likewise in a higher degree or another manner. There is a probability, that the right appearances were intended: there is no probability, that the wrong appearances were. We cannot suspect irregularity and disorder to be designed. The pillars of a building appear beautiful; but their being likewise its support does not destroy that beauty: there still remains a reason to believe that the architect intended the beautiful appearance, after we have found out the reference, support. It would be reasonable for a man of himself to think thus, upon the first piece of architecture he ever saw.

ever, that we may do all the words of this law;" which reflection of Moses, put in general terms, is, that the only knowledge which is of any avail to us is that which teaches us our duty, or assists us in the discharge of it. The economy of the universe, the course of Nature, Almighty power exerted in the creation and government of the world is out of our reach. What would be the consequence if we could really get an insight into these things is very uncertain; whether it would assist us in, or divert us from, what we have to do in this present state. If then there be a sphere of knowledge, of contemplation and employment, level to our capacities, and of the utmost importance to us, we ought surely to apply ourselves with all diligence to this our proper business, and esteem everything else nothing, nothing as to us in comparison of it. Thus Job, discoursing of natural knowledge, how much it is above us, and of wisdom in general, says, "God understandeth the way thereof, and he knoweth the place thereof. And unto man he said, Behold the fear of the Lord, that is wisdom; and to depart from evil is understanding." Other orders of creatures may perhaps be let into the secret counsels of heaven, and have the designs and methods of Providence, in the creation and government of the world, communicated to them; but this does not belong to our rank or condition. "The fear of the Lord, and to depart from evil," is the only wisdom which man should aspire after as his work and business. The same is said, and with the same connexion and context, in the conclusion of the book of Ecclesiastes. Our ignorance, and the little we can know of other things, affords a reason why we should not perplex ourselves about them; but no way invalidates that which is the "conclusion of the whole matter: Fear God and keep his commandments: for this is the whole duty of man." So that Socrates was not the first who endeavoured to draw men off from labouring after, and laying stress upon other knowledge, in comparison of that which related to morals. Our province is virtue and religion, life and manners; the science of improving the temper, and making the heart better. This is the field assigned us to cultivate: how much it has lain neglected is indeed astonishing. Virtue is demonstrably the happiness of man; it consists in good actions, proceeding from a good

principle, temper, or heart. Overt acts are entirely in our power. What remains is, that we learn to keep our heart, to govern and regulate our passions, mind, affections, that so we may be free from the impotencies of fear, envy, malice, covetousness, ambition; that we may be clear of these, considered as vices seated in the heart—considered as constituting a general wrong temper, from which general wrong frame of mind all the mistaken pursuits, and far the greatest part of the unhappiness of life, proceed. He who should find out one rule to assist us in this work would deserve infinitely better of mankind than all the improvers of other knowledge put together.

Lastly, let us adore that Infinite wisdom and power and goodness which is above our comprehension. "To whom hath the root of wisdom been revealed? Or who hath known her wise counsels? There is one wise and greatly to be feared, the Lord sitting upon his throne. He created her, and saw her, and numbered her, and poured out upon her all his works." If it be thought a considerable thing to be acquainted with a few, a very few, of the effects of Infinite power and wisdom; the situation, bigness, and revolution of some of the heavenly bodies, what sentiments should our minds be filled with concerning Him who appointed to each its place and measure and sphere of motion, all which are kept with the most uniform constancy? "Who stretched out the heavens, and telleth the number of the stars, and calleth them all by their names. Who laid the foundations of the earth, who comprehendeth the dust of it in a measure, and weigheth the mountains in scales and the hills in a balance." And when we have recounted all the appearances which come within our view, we must add, "Lo, these are part of his ways, but how little a portion is heard of him? Canst thou by searching find out God? Canst thou find out the Almighty unto perfection? It is as high as heaven, what canst thou do? Deeper than hell, what canst thou know?"

The conclusion is, that in all lowliness of mind we set lightly by ourselves; that we form our temper to an implicit submission to the Divine Majesty; beget within ourselves an absolute resignation to all the methods of his providence, in his dealings with the children of men; that in the deepest

humility of our souls we prostrate ourselves before him, and join in that celestial song, "Great and marvellous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou king of saints. Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name?"

INDEX (I).

TO THE ANALOGY AND DISSERTATIONS, AND TO THE NOTES OF THE VOLUME.

When the chapter is not repeated, the reference belongs to the chapter previously named. *See* Pref. vi.

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INDEX (2).

In framing questions on the several Chapters of the Analogy, the following Index, in addition to the Analysis, will be found of service.